

Linguistics and the Third Reich

Mother-tongue fascism, race
and the science of language

Christopher M. Hutton

Routledge Studies in the History of Linguistics



**Also available as a printed book
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LINGUISTICS AND THE THIRD REICH

In this ground-breaking work, Christopher Hutton demonstrates that an important component of European fascist thought was derived from linguistics, not least the notion of an Aryan people with an original language and homeland. In Nazi Germany, linguistic fascism took the form of a cult of the mother-tongue, expressed in a horror of linguistic assimilation and a xenophobic assertion of German language rights. Jews were considered to lack a healthy relationship to the German language and therefore to threaten the bond between the Germans and their language.

Linguistics and the Third Reich presents an insightful account of the academic politics of the Nazi era and analyses the work of selected linguists, including Trier and Weisgerber. Hutton situates Nazi linguistics within the policies of Hitler's state and within the history of modern linguistics. Drawing upon a wide range of unpublished and published sources, he attacks long-standing myths about the role of linguistics within the Nazi state and about the relationship of linguistics to race theory.

This is the first single-volume guide to the linguistics of the Third Reich and fills a large gap in the literature on National Socialist ideology. Hutton's research makes a remarkable contribution to the understanding of links between linguistics and the development of European racial theory and to the field of the history of linguistics.

Christopher M. Hutton currently teaches linguistics in the Department of English at the University of Hong Kong. He previously taught Yiddish Studies at the University of Texas, USA and at the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies, UK.

ROUTLEDGE STUDIES IN THE HISTORY
OF LINGUISTICS

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London and New York

First published 1999
by Routledge
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2001.

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Hutton, Christopher.

Linguistics and the Third Reich : mother-tongue fascism, race and the science of language / Christopher M. Hutton.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Germany--Languages--Political aspects. 2. Linguistics--Germany--History--20th century. 3. National socialism. 4. German language--Political aspects. 5. Yiddish language--Political aspects. 6. Racism in language. I. Title.

P119.32.G3H88 1998

306.44'943'09041--dc21

98-13546

CIP

ISBN 0-415-18954-3 (Print Edition)
ISBN 0-203-02101-0 Master e-book ISBN
ISBN 0-203-17371-6 (Glassbook Format)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is my pleasure to acknowledge the staff of the following institutions for their invaluable assistance in the course of this research over a number of years: Bundesarchiv, Koblenz; Bundesarchiv-Zehlendorf, Berlin (formerly Berlin Document Center); Staatsbibliothek, Berlin; Institut für Zeitgeschichte, München; Deutsche Bibliothek, Frankfurt; Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek, Frankfurt; Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart; Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart; Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, München; the French National Archives, Paris; the library of the University of Texas at Austin, in particular Nathan Snyder; the library of the Taylor Institute, Oxford, especially Jill Hughes; the Wiener Library, London; the Yivo Institute for Jewish Research, New York; the University of Hong Kong library, in particular the inter-library loan department.

Given the nature of the material discussed here, I must emphasize that the views I present in this book are my responsibility alone. That said, I owe much to my teachers of German studies: C. E. Longland of Colchester Royal Grammar School, the late Dr Leslie Seiffert of Hertford College, Oxford, and Joachim Mock. For their generosity and hospitality over many years I would like to thank the Mock family of Fulda. Very special thanks are likewise due to Dafna Clifford, Paul Dennis, Alva Noe, Rebecca Pates, and to Elisabeth Mach-Hour, Nikolaus Mach-Hour, Tini Salzberger, Manuela Landuris and all in the Grünwalderstrasse in Munich for their friendship and support. Benno Barnard, Deanne Lehman, Gerrie van Rompaey and the denizens of *De nieuwe Linde* in Antwerp provided a refreshing angle on European affairs, as well as warm hospitality. I learned many lessons from my time in Yiddish studies, and would like to thank my teachers, colleagues and students at Columbia University, the Yivo Institute for Jewish Research, the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies, in particular Dovid Katz and Dov-Ber Kerler, and the University of Texas at Austin, especially Janet Swaffar, Katherine Arens and Seth Wolitz. I am very grateful to Talbot Taylor for his encouragement of this project in one of its

earlier incarnations, and to Rudi Thoemmes of Thoemmes Press, Bristol. The University of Hong Kong has provided an excellent venue for consideration of academic politics, and study leave during the academic year 1994–5.

I am greatly indebted to Gerd Simon of the University of Tübingen, who commented in detail on an earlier draft, offering general advice (not all of which I have followed) and criticisms, in addition saving me from a number of factual errors. Dr Simon showed me important published and unpublished materials from his library and private archive to which I would otherwise not have had access, and was a most generous host during my visit to Tübingen in November 1997. My thanks also to: J.C. Lai for his invaluable computer skills, an anonymous reviewer for a promotion exercise for his careful reading of an earlier draft; to Dominic Blättler, Konrad Koerner, Robert Young, and to my colleagues David Clarke, Daniel R. Davis, Barbara Gorayska, Elaine Ho, Douglas Kerr, Gregory Lee, Geoff Wade; Grant Evans for discussions of the politics of ethnic classification and national identity; John Joseph for pointing out to me the importance of Theosophy for linguistics and for stimulating exchanges on this and a wide range of topics; Roy Harris for many lessons in thinking laterally about linguistics; Kingsley Bolton for his continual encouragement of this project, for reading and commenting on earlier drafts of this book, and for a series of discussions about the politics of linguistics, colonialism, nationalism, and much else; for unfailing support and advice in times of need, Hollis, Melvyl and, above all, Louisa.

Author's note: except where otherwise noted all translations are my own.

INTRODUCTION

This research began as a project to look at linguistic theories as models of society. I intended to read inter-war European linguistics as offering models of social coherence and social order, focusing on German linguists such as Leo Weisgerber, Jost Trier and Hans Sperber. It was not at all my original intention to deal with the National Socialist period; however I gradually came to see that I had a naive view of the history of German linguistics, and of linguistics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and that much received wisdom about categories of race and language in the history of linguistics was misleading.

Linguists working today assume that the concepts and paradigms within which they work differ markedly from those of the Nazi era. If they pay the matter any thought at all, they assume that Nazi linguistics fell from grace through the sin of identifying language with race. Modern linguistics sees itself as a forward-looking discipline, and regards the activity of linguistic analysis as either ideologically neutral ('scientific') or ideologically positive, in that most linguists rhetorically claim the equality of all language systems. The rise of the discipline is presented as a liberation struggle from the tyranny of traditional grammar and the Latin parts of speech, and from allegedly absurd beliefs such as the etymological 'fallacy' (i.e. the assertion that the 'true' meaning of a word is to be sought in its etymology). The history of linguistics is thus conceptualized in a manner akin to nationalistic histories, in which the former oppressors are blackened and the stages in the development of national (disciplinary) autonomy celebrated.

Whatever the merits of this position, I do not believe it encourages honest contemplation of the history of linguistics. Linguistics is a scholarly discipline, not a liberated nation, and many of its descriptive or methodological principles reflect the politics of European nationalism in the last two centuries. Notions such as 'native speaker' and 'native speaker intuition', 'natural language', 'linguistic system', 'speech community' have their roots in nationalist organicism, and the fundamental 'vernacularism' of linguistics needs to be seen as an ideology with a complex history and real political consequences. That ideology is alive and well today and informs much thinking in all branches of the discipline, including theoretical and cognitive linguistics. The widespread

belief held by linguists today that some great conceptual distance separates them both from nineteenth century German linguistics and from linguistics in the Nazi era is unfounded.

In the National Socialist period, the academic presses kept rolling until well into 1944, and the amount of published and unpublished writings available for evaluation is vast. While I have tried to cover a range of topics and scholars, many important areas have been treated only in passing or not at all. I have not discussed specific descriptive models of grammar and grammatical description, except in general terms. My treatment of the question of the homeland of the Indo-Europeans and related matters of 'Aryan' linguistics is far from comprehensive; there are, however, extensive discussions of these issues in Poliakov (1974) and Römer (1985). Inevitably the choice of topics and linguists reflects my own interests within linguistics; the linguists to whom I pay the most attention (Trier, Weisgerber, Kloss) are, however, arguably the German linguists of the post-Neogrammarian generation who made the biggest impact in the discipline as a whole. Kloss in particular remains influential today.

The biographical details on individual linguists provided here are incomplete,¹ and the absence of an indication that a particular individual was a member of the Nazi Party (NSDAP) should not be taken to imply that that person definitely was not a member. My strong impression, having done a certain amount of archival research in connection with this project, and having read the results of those researches by others, is that the more one looks the worse the picture appears. Distinctions between 'core Nazis' and 'fellow-travellers', 'opportunists', 'objective scholars', 'modernizers', 'inner emigrants', 'conservative-reactionaries', 'race theorists', while they have their uses, have too often been applied without consistency and without thought, thereby serving in the creation of protective myths around scholars and ideas.

National Socialist scholarship is part of Western scholarship, and Nazism has its roots in many aspects of the European past, and in ideas found both in twentieth century Europe and North America. I have found no fundamental contradiction between adherence to Nazism and adherence to high standards in scholarship or to scientific method, however chilling this conclusion might be. All the sciences of human measurement – physical anthropology, human biology, race science, linguistics, etc. – contributed to Nazi scholarship, as they have contributed to new forms of self-understanding in the modern world. Indeed, many of the ideas that are now picked out as fascist were common currency among educated Europeans during the first half of the twentieth century.

The discipline of linguistics has in general preferred not to look at the central role played by ideas derived from linguistics in Nazi ideology, and the problem is often defined away in terms of a 'confusion of linguistic and racial categories'. In particular I now find it peculiar how the postulation of an original Indo-European or Aryan language and people has been hailed as an

achievement within the history of linguistics, and the role of those ideas in intellectual and practical politics passed over in silence. Discussion of the political impact of these ideas has been largely confined to intellectual history; in survey histories of linguistics only brief mention is made of the ‘abuse’ of these ideas under National Socialism. But the term ‘abuse’ begs the question, and an ill-defined race theory has been left to play the role of ‘fall-guy’.

At the conclusion of his history of the idea of race, Hannaford puts philologists in first place in the list of the guilty:

I hope I have shown that the fictitious unities of race and nation whipped up by philologists, anthropologists, historians, and social scientists of the nineteenth century as alternatives to the antique political state led them to forget a very important past and to invent in its place novel forms of governance that were pursued with vengeance and arrogance and all the cunning skill of the fore-thinkers.

(1996: 399)

Even the most superficial look at the problem makes it clear that ideas about an Indo-European (Indo-Germanic, Aryan) people (or race or tribe) derive from linguistics; race science took its lead from the study of language. In a wider context, the ‘evil aristocrat’ Comte Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau has been cast as the villain of nineteenth century Western thought, whereas in fact race theory belonged as much to bourgeois, progressive liberals such as the linguist August Pott, and natural scientists such as Ernst Haeckel.

Linguistics is both the parent and the child of race theory. It is the parent, in the sense that nineteenth century physical anthropologists took their lead from linguistics and linguistic categories. It is the child, in the sense that linguistics has reclaimed its role as the premier science in the classification of human diversity, elaborating a ‘characterology’ or ‘typology’ of the world’s languages, and therefore of the world’s ethnic groups. In recent years, the discipline of cultural anthropology has entered into a period of political self-doubt about its ‘master-narrative’ of cultural description, while linguistics has resisted, or rather ignored, the disruptive discourses massing at its gates. There has been a tendency in recent years for practitioners of neighbouring disciplines such as anthropology and archaeology to compare their own disciplinary foundations unfavourably with those of linguistics. Thus Anthony (1995: 96), in a critique of both Nazi and eco-feminist readings of the archaeological record, looks to historical linguistics for an objective source of knowledge. Linguistics ‘rests upon a theoretical and methodological foundation that is more secure than that of prehistoric archaeology’. Linguistics can make ‘predictive statements’,

whereas '[n]o descriptive method or theory of culture change would permit an archaeologist to predict accurately the shape or decoration of the pots belonging to an as-yet undiscovered phase of a prehistoric culture'. The question of the status and objectivity of linguistic methodology is complex (and is not directly the subject of this book); however there can surely be no reason to argue that linguistics enjoys any special autonomy or privilege in relation to ideology.

One key ideology to be found within National Socialist thought was that of the mother-tongue, and this ideology was particularly associated with linguists and linguistics. While the importance of mother-tongue ideology in Nazi scholarship has been widely recognized by German scholars (e.g. Ziegler 1965: 159; Simon 1982, 1986a; Römer 1985; Ahlzweig 1994), aside from these specialist studies by intellectual historians, there are few signs within linguistics of even the most basic grasp of the history and explosive impact of this ideology. Nazism was an ideological coalition, and one of the fundamental elements in that coalition was the defence of mother-tongue rights: Nazism was a language-rights movement. Pan-Germanism, as much as pan-Turkism or pan-Slavism, was a consequence of ideas ultimately derived from linguistics.

The centrality of the notion of mother-tongue can be seen in its links to other concepts within Nazi thought. One of these was 'world view' (*Weltanschauung*, *Weltbild*, *Weltsicht*). In Nazi Germany, the term *Weltanschauung* was used as a short-hand way of referring to Nazi ideology, and in the bureaucracy of personal and political evaluation individuals would be assessed with respect to their reliability in matters of 'world-view'. There is a clear link between this emphasis on world-view, and the notions of linguistic relativity and mother-tongue autonomy propounded within linguistics. For Nazi thought was steeped in anti-universalism and in the rhetoric of cultural difference. Different peoples were held to have different world-views, and no one nation had the right to impose its understanding of the world on any other; different languages embodied different cultural and ethical values. Behind this attack on universalism was a rejection of universal religion ('Judeo-Christianity'), universal rationality, universal languages (particularly 'artificial' ones), and Anglo-American democratic liberalism.

In 1934, Schmidt-Rohr contemplated the possibility that one day all the inhabitants of the earth would speak the same language, perhaps some kind of 'Basic English'. This would be a great loss to humanity, even if economic and diplomatic communication would be facilitated, for the rich diversity of human cultures would be lost. While it is true, continued Schmidt-Rohr, that this linguistic disorder creates dangerous tensions, especially now that it has been recognized that linguistic territory equals national territory, nonetheless that struggle between peoples is a necessary stage in the creation of a world fit for humans to live in. The Führer and the German people need to recognize the geopolitical importance of language questions (1934a: 232).

Universalizing ideologies were perceived to be threats to mother-tongue (or 'Germanic')

religion, native patterns of thought, national and ethnic languages, and particularistic ethical systems and values. Within the cultural politics of world-view, beliefs about both race and language played key roles, with the rhetorical emphasis often on race alone, or race and language, or language and race. But whatever the order of priority given to these two aspects of national inheritance, language of necessity played a crucial role. For race is mute, and language can speak; it *is* world view, and it has the power to bring race into the realm of historical action (Schmidt-Rohr 1939b: 162).

One key aspect of the ideology of the mother-tongue was its importance – in the context of Nazism – as an anti-Semitic ideology. For Jews were held to lack a sense of loyalty to their mother-tongue, and were therefore regarded as having an ‘unnatural’ relationship to language. Jews lived in many countries and spoke many tongues; they were rootless nomads with loyalty only to their race. The separation of mother-tongue and race meant that language for them was an instrument of communication only, and a means of entry into other cultures and countries. Furthermore, Judaism was built on veneration of a sacred language, and that sacred language was not the mother-tongue.

Jews, given that their culture was based on a separation of the sacred and the vernacular, could maintain their identity across different cultures and language situations. In contrast, German identity was inextricably tied to the mother-tongue. In the German diaspora, the situation was critical. At home, not only were Jews speaking German as their quasi-native language, but the spirit of the German language was under attack from liberal universalism and communism, both reflections of the Jewish spirit.

German linguists tended to see German history as an exile or diaspora, a stateless confusion in which only the language had held the German people together and marked a boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Weisgerber 1938b). The Germans had survived ‘diaspora’ through the will to language, and this special relationship to the mother-tongue was the key to the survival of the people as a racial or ethnic unity. The language could unite an otherwise divided national consciousness, transcending confessional, regional, political and class divisions. But in post-Versailles Europe, it was clear that the boundaries of the *Volk* were falling.

On this model, German history offered a mirror-image of Jewish history. Jews were the evil twin of the Germans, their racial opposites (*Gegenrasse*). The story of the Jews was one of survival and continuity through a set of texts in a sacred language, and through a race instinct that was indifferent to mother-tongue. The Jews were a special case and a unique threat, since their capacity for racial survival was superior to that of the Germans, and since they had no need of territory and no need of mother-tongue. They thrived in cities, blurring the discrete boundaries

between the European peoples, and spreading various forms of universalist thought (communism, liberalism, capitalism, ‘Judeo-Christianity’, freemasonry, international languages). Thus – on this view – the post-Versailles European order represented a rising threat to the German identity, and a concomitant boost to the Jews and their allies.

German linguists like Heinz Kloss, Jost Trier and Leo Weisgerber saw in the German diaspora, which had been a symbol of the energy of the Germans and their civilizing mission, the threat of the Yankee ‘melting-pot’ on the one hand and assimilation by the Slavic hordes – conceptualized as Asiatic – on the other. Within this framework, the conquest of America, and the German expansion eastwards in the Second World War were state-building exercises carried out against ‘native’ peoples conceptualized as nomadic, rootless, passive, or underdeveloped.

In the newly open horizons of the United States of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and then in the Europe of the Treaty of Versailles at the end of the First World War, diaspora German, which had for so long defined the boundary of Germanness in the absence of a central state, was clearly heading for extinction. For in a world of discrete national languages which were the property of autonomous political units, only the force of the state could maintain the boundary of the mother-tongue. If Germans were to be found behind the boundaries of other states, then they were logically destined to assimilate and disappear from the *Volk*. A national boundary that was defended only by the primal familial tie of the family and the bonding between mother and child was intrinsically vulnerable to assimilation. The German woman who raised her German child with a German father, but within a Slavic state, raised it with at best an ambiguous ‘father-language’. The father at home did not speak the language of authority and the state. That fundamental bond between child, mother and language could only be protected by a powerful father who represented the fusion of familial and state authority: the ‘mother-tongue’ needed the protection of the boundaries of the ‘father-land’. Hence the scholarly anxiety about which races had true ‘state-building’ potential. Only if the mother-tongue was the same as the father-tongue, both literally (the biological father) and metaphorically (the language of the state), and if the borders were secure, could assimilation be avoided.

In National Socialist Germany, the German language was the object of increasingly intense veneration by professional linguists committed to the notion of mother-tongue. These linguists believed it was their sacred duty to protect and preserve the mother-tongue, to contribute to the salvation of the German people itself and its liberation from history, hybridity and social divisions, and the horrors of assimilation, thereby reconnecting it with the foundation of national Being. Reverence for the mother-tongue reached at points a mystical level. It was expressed in the language of the cult, and had complex links with the Germanic-pagan ideal of a pre-patriarchal matriarchal order.

If this seems somewhat far-fetched, a sceptic might like to begin their reading on this subject with the closing paragraphs of Georg Schmidt-Rohr's essay 'Race and language'. There the 'Mother Tongue' is enthroned as a deity, the object of intense veneration ('unshakeable love') from which radiates life-giving and life-sustaining forces (1939b). This cult of matriarchal devotion can be juxtaposed to 'patriarchy', which in this context connotes the authority of sacred texts in 'dead languages' over life and the life-force. The language of patriarchy, the father-tongue, was the language of the scriptures, either Hebrew or Latin, i.e. Judaism or Catholicism. The mother-tongue gave life and energy, it was grounded in the earth, in the life-rhythm; the father-tongue was the universal voice of guilt and repression, it denied the link between human beings and the soil, the earth. It negated the life-force in name of the after-life; the world was a 'vale of tears'.

Faced with the rise of race theory and physical anthropology in the mid-nineteenth century, linguistics had a number of choices. One was to argue that language did in fact directly reflect physical race, that there were identifiable race-features in language, and this view has had a number of representatives in late nineteenth and early nineteenth century linguistics. A second was to promote a notion of a language as creating community, and as representing that force which united the members of a society in the absence of a common race, religion, or culture. This notion of a pure synchronic identity is to be found in Saussure's *Cours*, and in its pure or most logical form the *Cours* seems to represent a radical new form of European liberalism, one in which membership of a community was given simply by a shared language. However entry into this community seemed to be entry into a community of absolutely like-minded people. If we read Saussure's model politically, then we see that it offers German Jews who speak German membership of the speech-community. But this is a speech community in which difference is erased: equality is bought at the price of absolute 'mental assimilation'. The political force of Saussure's ideas was in any case mitigated by their presentation as a form of foundational rhetoric for a science of language. The postulation of a synchronic linguistic system, the *langue*, was thus part socio-politics, part methodological postulate. There remained the politically awkward question of which came first, the community or the language. This was the intellectual chicken-and-egg problem which was naturalized under the heading of 'speech-community' in the inauguration of a science of language.

The third possibility was to conceptualize the language-system as an organically-structured 'mother-tongue', and to see in the bond between mother and child the primal site of socialization. In this bond, the link between race and language was determined indirectly, but at a fundamental level by the primary socialization of the child.

The idealizations of linguistics might be seen as a harmless form of conceptual clarification or

idealization; but they can be linked to socio-political reality in politically radical ways. This can take the form of a worship of conformity, purity, like-mindedness, conceptual unity, and linguistic order. The rules of the language can be seen as social rules, and the meanings of the words as ideological meanings. Under these circumstances, the linguistic system can be conceptualized by the totalitarian linguist in the same way that law can be conceptualized by the totalitarian lawyer: as an autonomous force that determines the boundaries of the acceptable. The linguist is the gate-keeper of the language, just as the lawyer is the guardian of the rules of law.

Without the notion of mother-tongue, Saussure's notion of *langue* is of the linguistic system as a total structure. In combination with the notion of mother-tongue, it becomes a structure that is passed from one generation to another. It is therefore a historical product that grants cultural continuity and identity to the *Volk* and must be protected at all costs. There is clearly a tension between mother-tongue continuity and the notion of a synchronically defined system, and that tension was reflected in the works of Jost Trier and Leo Weisgerber.

In general, Nazi scholarship did *not* argue that the German *Volk* was a single racial unity; nor were the Jews a single unitary race (Günther 1930: 11ff.). Physicalist race theory thus was itself a potentially disruptive discourse for nationalism, for, according to its categories, the nation-states were not racially homogenous. The relationship of *Rasse* to *Volk* was not one of simple equivalence. Just as John Buchan argued that the Scottish people were made up of three race-stocks, the Saxon, the Norse and the Celtic (1924: 52), so H.F.K. Günther saw the German *Volk* as made up of several races, of which the Nordic race was just one (Günther 1933: 22–4).²

It was in this sense that only the language could create *Volk*, because it could unite distinct races within a common binding organic structure. The native language was the bridge between race and *Volk*; if you lost your language, one argument ran, you lost your identity, since the *Volk* was not a pure racial type.

Of course in the early twentieth century there were many different views of how language, race, landscape, climate and national character were related. John Buchan lamented that 'very soon, I am afraid, an Englishman will not be able to connect a Scotsman with the Scots language, or Scots theology, or even Scots drink. But we shall still be different – very different; not in externals, perhaps, but in the things that matter, our characters and our minds' (1924: 52). Lowland Scots was in any case the vernacular of only part of the Scottish people. In the case of Germany, its borders on all sides had fluctuated wildly with history; it had no heartland into which it could retreat, no Hadrian's Wall. From the point of view of Munich, Berlin could not be the heartland; nor could Frankfurt. These regional loyalties were tied to strong dialect loyalties. But linguistics – unlike race theory – offered a science of description that could make whole what

history, religion and geography were perceived to have sundered. For linguistics naturalized the normative discipline of grammar into a descriptive science, thereby erasing its dependence on the existence of a common literary standard, and projecting back through history a national myth of people united by a language. Linguistics could accommodate to many different levels of abstraction, and wholeness could be recreated on a higher level of generality. The mother-tongue was the force that could speak for race; it could recreate race in its own image and be its voice. Linguistics, in turn, was the voice of mother-tongue.

It was possible therefore to see the *Volk*-creating power of language in two ways. Firstly, one could argue that it was language alone that provided the unifying force of *Volk*, regardless of race, that therefore Jews could become members of the German *Volk*. Alternatively, it could be argued that race defined an outer boundary, so that one could Germanize members of certain races who belonged to other *Völker*, but not Jews, because their race mentality prevented it. The linguist Schmidt-Rohr apparently moved from the first view to the second under pressure in 1933. But – it should be noted – *both* views are compatible with anti-Semitism. For if Jews were part of the *Volk*, they could be required not to disturb its unity. They could be required to abandon particularism in matters of culture, belief, and to renounce their loyalty across national boundaries to Jews in other countries. For those other nations were Germany's opponents in the great struggle of the nations for survival, domination and cultural supremacy.

It might be objected that, whatever the involvement of linguistics with nationalism, there is an equally strong tradition of universalism within linguistics, one that looks to notions such as logical form and universal grammar, and draws its inspiration from philosophy, mathematical logic, computer science, information theory, semiotics, etc. However, any form of linguistics that purports to study the phenomenon of 'natural language', and does so under labels such as 'German', 'French', or 'the grammar of French', 'the phonology of German', 'the language instinct', drawing in this on 'native speaker intuitions', is involved willy-nilly in the politics of language and linguistic description. Indeed the political assumptions are all the more powerful for being unstated and unrecognized. Furthermore, questions of the social role of linguists, their roles as missionaries and colonial officials, their sources of funding, their moral responsibility, and the possible applications of their 'scientific' work are not generally addressed within the discipline of linguistics itself. As has been pointed out, the willingness of academics in the Nazi era to put their skills at the service of the state does not justify the retreat into an impenetrable and hermetically-sealed private academic world (Simon 1985b: 134–7).

Much of modern linguistics, in an effort to avoid the socio-political complexities of language and linguistic categories, has sought a realm in which 'pure science' can be practised. In this it has moved increasingly towards a neurological physicalism, and the science of evolutionary biology.

Linguistics has thereby been embraced the very intellectual forces it was seeking to avoid, and reinstated the biological study of human diversity. For no cogent explanation has been offered within currently dominant linguistic theories as to why systematic human linguistic diversity should exist at all. The increasing Darwinism of much recent speculation has therefore opened a path for the inference that the language faculty *qua* biological endowment is the product of human evolution, and that therefore – given that intraspecies variation is the foundation of evolutionary theory – the language faculty varies from one person, or group, to another.

One aim of this book is to show the links between Nazi scholarship, linguistics and wider intellectual movements and philosophies such as ‘vitalism’, ‘Theosophy’ and ‘characterology’. Vitalism as a philosophy involved the rejection of late nineteenth century biological materialism to embrace various theories of matter based on notions such as ‘life-force’. Linguistics, in its various flirtations with biological metaphors and with evolutionary theory, was a natural home for vitalistic theories, as the linguistic sign could be plausibly explained in vitalistic terms as the dynamic union of form and meaning. The rejection of Neogrammarian physicalist materialism, which underlies so much of linguistics under National Socialism, was ‘vitalistic’ in this sense.

The movement of Theosophy drew on the world’s mystical and philosophical traditions (occultism, esotericism, spiritualism, gnosticism, freemasonry, etc.) to create a new form of human understanding. While it argued for universal human equality, this movement also had a strongly elitist subtext, one that linked it to the then fashionable ‘Aryanism’ and Social Darwinism. This movement attracted a wide following in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century; among its twentieth century off-shoots was the Anthroposophical movement of Rudolf Steiner in Germany. Characterology, which in its narrow sense refers to the theories of Ludwig Klages, can more broadly be defined as the disciplines of the measurement of human individual and group difference, ‘a physiognomics of everything human’ (Otto Neurath on Oswald Spengler, see Neurath 1973: 195). In this sense, both race theory and linguistics are ‘characterological’. The advantage that linguistics has over other forms of characterology (phrenology, physiognomy, graphology, physical anthropology, race theory, etc.) is that it draws on the prestige of writing, written notation, ‘traditional grammar’ and logic within Western culture. Characterology overlaps both with vitalism and with Theosophy (for example in the person of Carl Gustav Jung). In pointing to these links, I am not implying that these theories and philosophies are all ‘Nazi’; rather I do not believe that we can draw a convenient line around National Socialist scholarship. The drawing of such boundaries is generally done in the service of the quasi-nationalist histories that disciplines write about themselves.

Thus in this book I point to links between National Socialist scholarship and other intellectual traditions not normally associated with Nazism, in particular modern linguistics. This is not in

order to put the label ‘fascist’ or ‘Nazi’ on particular ways of thinking; rather in the hope of provoking a more profound reflection within mainstream linguistics on Nazism as a scholarly phenomenon, and to show how its personnel, ideas and theoretical constructs cannot be ‘imagined outside’ the disciplinary history of linguistics. Clearly this process cannot be entirely without consequences for one’s attitudes to certain ideas and traditions. In particular, I would not hesitate to include the ideology of mother-tongue rights within a survey of European fascist thought, and would argue for its centrality to many aspects of the Nazi regime’s policies. This should not be taken to imply support for (or rejection of) any particular model of language planning; I do however reject the promotion of a mother-tongue ideal as the *universally* most ‘natural’ or ‘authentic’ or ‘valid’ option. But that is emphatically not the same as saying that all mother-tongue discourse is Nazi or fascist. ‘Mother-tonguism’ is a political ideology, and needs to be seen in each context against its socio-political and historical background.

Much of the material that follows is concerned with the minutiae of academic linguistics under National Socialism. However this book is about linguistics, rather than ‘Nazi linguistics’. These linguists were not deviants in the history of the discipline, but representatives of some of its long-standing beliefs. Academic linguists over the last two centuries have been involved in the promotion of their science as a key to the categorization of human diversity, and therefore have been active participants in the imagining of new forms of communities and community-ties. These new forms of human collective – ethnic groups bound by common language – have been internalized in the methodology of the discipline, and projected back onto human history as a universal law. It is not for nothing that the contemporary journal incorporating prehistory, archaeology and linguistics is called *Mother Tongue*.³ No mother-tongue ideology, no reconstruction of linguistic history (except through the history of written texts).

Even though the rise of a science of physical race had shown the disjunction between language and race, language – it was held – could still be used as a tool in prehistorical reconstruction. For the mode of linguistic ‘transmission and acquisition’ in human societies was not that of the animals (in which the cry was purely natural), nor did the nature of speech simply reflect the structure of the brain and the organs of speech (for an English baby could grow up to speak perfect Chinese). The link was the ‘native tongue’ or ‘mother-tongue’, in which the child was bonded to community, and the language thereby linked to race. Language could after all be a true ‘record of human history, even of race-history’ (Whitney 1875: 274); language and physical ethnology were both working with different methodologies towards the same end: ‘a tracing out of the actual and genealogical history of the human races’ (1867: 371). Language, said Whitney, was ‘[i]n every part and particle [. . .] instinct with history’ (1867: 381).

Nazism was an extension and radicalization of the colonial projects of the nineteenth and

early twentieth centuries, as well as the brutal application of nationalist and chauvinist ideas drawn from a wide range of disciplines and sources, including linguistics. One element in the crisis that it represented can be traced to British colonialism in India, and William Jones' famous lecture in which he stated:

The Sanscrit language, whatever may be its antiquity, is of wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either; yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong, indeed, that no philologist could examine them all the three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists. There is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the Gothick and the Celtick, though blended with a very different idiom, had the same origin with the Sanscrit; and the old Persian might be added to the same family [. . .].

(1786: 422–3)

The rise of a science of language which looked back to this statement as a founding moment gave rise to an intense anxiety about the kinship that was implied between Indians and Europeans. The notion of an 'Aryan invasion', and a subsequent fall through assimilation, which was developed to account for the existence of an ancient and sophisticated civilization in India, offers a wider framework within which to understand Nazism as a radical fusion of nationalism and colonialism. The Aryans were alleged to have conquered India, and then declined into decadence through interbreeding with the inferior indigenous population. The Germans had been pioneers in Eastern Europe and the Americas, but now they seemed doomed to inter-marriage and racial decline. The expansion of the boundaries of the Reich eastwards in the Second World War was a deadly mixture of colonialism and nationalism, in which the boundaries of the Reich were also to be the boundaries of the *Volk*. That *Volk* was interpreted ambivalently as the Germans, or more globally, as the Aryans.

It was therefore not necessarily the view that speech articulation 'naturally' reflected race that was politically explosive, though of course that view could be used for racist ends.⁴ The profound crisis came from the perception that language and race were drifting ever further apart. It was the 'quasi-natural' primal bond between mother, child and language that was both the origin of the *Volk* and its point of maximum vulnerability. The language was imbibed with the mother's milk, and that socializing moment shaped the child in the image of the language, and fused it into

the body of the *Volk* through the intense emotional bond to the mother. The boundaries of the language were the surest boundaries of the *Volk*; the loss of the mother-tongue, linguistic assimilation, was the first step to complete assimilation.

In the post-First World War era those boundaries were felt to be on the verge of collapse. The primal bond was not strong enough on its own to provide continuity, and the threat of assimilation could only be fought off by the collective will, by sexual hygiene, by loyalty to the clan-nation. That will had to be realized in the state, and in the state's power to create a force-field around the innocent and vulnerable mother-child at its core. It had to defend that bond with all its power, for on it depended the psychological, racial and geographical borders of the *Volk*, and the triumph of the German people in the life and death struggle of the nations.

WHOSE HISTORY?

Introduction

The question of ‘historicization’ has come to be central to debates about the historiography of Nazism, not least the ‘historians’ controversy’ (*Historikerstreit*). The *Historikerstreit* involved a polemical debate chiefly among German historians and intellectuals about how or whether the National Socialist era could be written into general history, and how different regimes were to be evaluated in relative terms (Stalinism versus Hitlerism, etc.). In a commentary on this debate Friedländer summed up the objectives of historicization as the attempt to make the study of the Nazi era ‘similar to that of any other historical phenomenon’, without pre-set limitation on the questions that can be asked and the methodology used:

It should be understood that the Nazi era cannot be judged only from the viewpoint of its catastrophic end, and that many aspects of life and social development during that era were not necessarily linked to bolstering the regime and its aims.

(1987: 313)

The Nazi era should be reinserted into its context in German and world history, and ‘the complex and contradictory aspects of that era’ recognized as ‘the only possible basis for anchoring a renewed moral evaluation of history in general in light of the lessons drawn from the historicization of National Socialism’. While Friedländer is not opposed to the comparative perspective on the Third Reich, he is concerned about the ease with which historicization can lead to relativization.

In addition to the *Historikerstreit* controversy, there occurred a *Volkskundlerstreit* in the discipline of folklore studies or *Volkskunde* (Dow and Lixfeld 1994: 273–4). This controversy concerned the careers of individual folklorists before after and during the Third Reich, and the

question of whether one could speak of two *Volkskundler*, one that sold out its academic ideals and became corrupt, and another that retained its integrity (Brückner 1988; Emmerich 1968, 1971; Lixfeld 1994: 64–5; Strobach 1994). Ideological disputes between academics of the two post-war German states also became tangled in the historiography of the Nazi period (Jacobeit 1994).

The question of relativization and historicization is an extremely difficult one. For it is right that the ultimate judgement of the Nazi regime should be determined by the crimes it committed, crimes which have come to be symbolized by the name Auschwitz; yet one cannot read the writings of academics in that period solely through the ‘catastrophic end’ of the regime. Their work must also be read together with the histories of their disciplines. Nor should they be seen *en bloc* as faceless representatives of an authoritarian state: each individual scholar is different, and, for all the mass of material available, there is much that we do not understand.

The extraordinary case of Hans Ernst Schneider, the SS-Hauptsturmführer, Germanist and Nazi cultural activist who reinvented himself after the war as Hans Schwerte, and went on to a successful career in the German Federal Republic, can stand as emblematic for the enigma of National Socialist scholarship as a whole (see König *et al.* 1997). That enigma concerns inner life and private authenticity and the question: ‘Who is the real self?’, the National Socialist or the liberal democrat, or neither.

These questions are of relevance to all scholarly activity, unless we wish to hide behind a protective myth of unconstrained and disinterested free thought.

Structuralism oppressed?

At the turn of the century, German scholars could have justifiably claimed leadership in Western linguistics, with their domination of historical linguistics (the Neogrammarians or *Junggrammatiker*) and their pre-eminence in fields such as psychology, ethnology, folklore studies and speech sciences. In the inter-war years this pre-eminence was lost as the different forms of European structuralism began to emerge and the United States began to gain importance as a centre for academic research into language, benefiting in this ultimately from various waves of scholarly emigration from Germany and Eastern Europe. The United States was an attractive goal not only for the impoverished masses of Eastern Europe but also for young Jewish scholars like Franz Boas (1858–1942), whose career paths were blocked by anti-Semitism in Germany. While the Neogrammarians retained considerable influence over German linguistics in the inter-war years, this period also saw the rise of a German school of organicist linguistics associated with the names

of Leo Weisgerber and Jost Trier. These linguists rejected what they saw as the atomism, materialism and methodological individualism of the Neogrammarians to embrace various forms of collectivity, and this stance was maintained during the Nazi period (e.g. De Vries 1945: 49).

Relatively little attention has been paid to the history of twentieth century German linguistics in general histories and surveys of the discipline. In part this reflects the perception that European structuralism had at best a tentative and ambiguous hold on German linguistic thought in a century when structural (and synchronic) linguistics became for a time nearly synonymous with the discipline. While it is true that an obsession with a particular Germanic-cultic vision of the past was one expression of academic National Socialism, many of the younger German academics of the National Socialist period saw themselves as modernizers and innovators, anxious to sweep away old methodologies and entrenched privileges. They saw themselves as in opposition to the conservative academic establishment, and sought to establish the relevance and importance of scholarship for the national cause and the ‘New Germany’, to make the study of the past relevant to the present. In the Nietzschean tradition, they opposed dry philology and pedantry as the study of ‘dead languages’, and sought a role for scholarship in the revitalized ‘New Germany’.

The interdisciplinary disciplines of *germanische Philologie* and *deutsche Philologie* certainly loomed large in the academic study of language in Germany. They were not clearly distinguished from *Germanistik*, a term which had been in use since the 1840s (Maas 1993: 386). However it should be emphasized that other disciplines also played an important role. Between 1933 and 1945 the study of language in Germany fell under the various European national philologies (*Romanistik*, *Anglistik*, *Slawistik*), it came as part of social scientific disciplines, particularly folklore (*Volkskunde*), but also ethnology (*Völkerkunde*), sociology (*Soziologie*), pedagogy and education (*deutsche Bildung*, *Deutschkunde*), geography, physical anthropology (*Anthropologie*), race studies (*Rassenkunde*), historical disciplines like prehistory and archaeology, classics, oriental studies, psychology and philosophy. Phonetics provided a bridge to psychology, as well as to the natural sciences. Linguistics also had a strong role in normative approaches to language (*Sprachpflege*). General linguistics (*allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft*) tended to be linked with historical and comparative linguistics, in particular Indo-European linguistics (*Indogermanistik*), a discipline with the Germanic languages at its core. But a form of general linguistics on Saussurean lines, associated with linguists in Switzerland, Paris, Prague, Copenhagen and Vienna, also played an important role. For example, Fritz Stroh used the term *allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft* in this sense in his contribution to Otto Behaghel’s 1924 *Festschrift* (Stroh 1924). There was in any case no clear boundary between Indo-European general linguistics and Saussurean general linguistics. Leo Weisgerber, for example, was both a trained Indo-Europeanist and someone engaged with

Saussure's ideas. It is therefore difficult, when dealing with the first half of the twentieth century, to determine who should be termed a linguist and who not. Maas talks of a 'semi-professionalization' of the discipline in that period (Maas 1988a: 256). Simon estimates the number of linguists who were active in the Third Reich to have been about 250 (1986a: 527).

Intellectual questions about the nature of language, language in history and language in relation to *Geist* were part of shared intellectual baggage in the humanities (*Geisteswissenschaften*), and might be addressed by literary critics, sociologists, historians, folklorists or philosophers in addition to linguists. Often such discussions centred on the works of Herder and Humboldt, both founding fathers of German linguistics, but also central to the intellectual culture as a whole. As illustration of this tradition of language study, one could cite one work from the 1920s and one from the late 1930s: Otto Funke's historical study of the philosophy of language (Funke 1927) and Hanna Weber's account of Herder's philosophy of language (Weber 1939).¹ Funke discussed the eighteenth century, James Harris' *Hermes* and then gave an overview of the modern scene, dividing it into three groups: the 'romantic' group (Humboldt, Steinthal, Wundt, E. Cassirer, W. Porzig and L. Weisgerber), the aesthetic-idealist tendency (Vossler) and the empirico-psychological group (H. Paul, Fr. Brentano, A. Marty, K. Bühler).² Funke was also the author of an introduction to Anton Marty's philosophy of language (Funke 1924; Otto 1941/2). Among others, Weber looked at Herder in relation to linguistic works by the following: Ernst Cassirer, Hans Freyer, Gunther Ipsen, Hans Naumann, Georg Schmidt-Rohr, Hugo Schuchardt, Fritz Stroh, Karl Vossler, Leo Weisgerber and Wilhelm Wundt (Weber 1939: 97–8).

The names listed above include both Nazis and victims of Nazism. For example, Ernst Cassirer, a Jew, was forced into retirement in 1933 and eventually reached the United States in 1941; Gunther Ipsen became a member of the NSDAP on 1 May 1937.³ Karl Bühler was arrested by the Gestapo on 23 March 1938, released on 7 May and subsequently allowed to emigrate (Sebeok 1981).⁴

How can the history of linguistics, a discipline that holds to the view that it is a science of unbiased description, be written so as to include linguistics under National Socialism? In post-war German linguistics, general European structuralism came to be seen as ideologically neutral. It was felt to be distinct from 'native' German traditions of linguistic investigation that looked back to figures such as Herder, Humboldt and Grimm and the ambivalences of German linguists' allegiance to structuralism became for many an index of their commitment to a dispassionate investigation of language. Peter von Polenz appeals to just such an opposition in his discussion of Saussure's place in German linguistics (1968). For von Polenz, the late date of the German translation of Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale* (1931) and the isolation of German

linguistics – even after 1945 with Weisgerber’s ‘Humboldt-Renaissance’ – are symptoms of a lack of rigour in German linguistics. He argues that 1931 was an inauspicious year for the reception of the *Cours* in Germany, and that ‘one sided diachronic thinking’ is related to historicism and conservatism, since it involves judging the value of words according to their past (Polenz 1967: 148). Polenz thus links the ‘etymological fallacy’, the idea that the true meaning of a word is to be found in its original or historically established meaning, to political conservatism and anti-Semitism (1967: 148–9). As illustration he cites etymological sketches published by the linguist Alfred Götze in the journal *Muttersprache* in the early years of National Socialist rule (1967: 128).⁵

Newmeyer argues that the distinction between structural linguistics and National Socialist linguistics was officially defined:

The political opposition to structural linguistics was strong enough to keep it from gaining a foothold in other places as well. Both nazi Germany and fascist Italy had officially condemned structuralism as incompatible with the ideology of the state. During the nazi period, the pages of German linguistic journals were filled with vivid descriptions of how the German soul manifests itself in its people’s masterful language.

(1986: 37)

However any notion that structuralism was repressed under National Socialism must be dismissed as a complete myth (Simon 1989b), as is the notion of a delayed reception of the *Cours* in Germany (Maas 1993: 406n). Nor is there any corollary between the holding of racist views and anti-structuralism: Eberhard Zwirner, the founder of a specific branch of structuralist linguistics (*Phonometrie*), is a case in point (see Chapter 9).

Saussure’s significance as a linguistic theorist was recognized in Germany immediately on the publication of the *Cours*, as the perceptive review by Schuchardt (1917) shows.⁶ Saussure’s *Cours* had been assimilated without too great difficulty into inter-war neo-Kantian ‘organicist’ linguistics, as Stroh (1924: 231, 1934: 231) illustrates. In Weisgerber’s writings of the late 1920s and early 1930s Saussure’s *Cours* is taken for granted as part of the intellectual background. Mathesius (1935/6) used the term ‘synchronisch’ without direct reference to Saussure. Trier (1932b) – a critic of Saussure – lamented however that the Saussurean notion of the inter-relatedness of word meanings had been neglected; this paper was republished in 1939. Funke (1944: 23, 23n) noted that Humboldt, Marty, de Saussure and Bally had articulated the notion of a language as a system. In an explicitly structuralist article, Funke, writing from Bern, recorded in

a footnote (1944: 21n) that he had presented the material in talks at the universities of Bonn and Marburg in 1942, i.e. in the heart of the German academic establishment at the height of the war.

The late 1930s and the war years also saw intense discussion of Saussure as a general linguistic theorist in the journals *Acta Linguistica* of Copenhagen and the *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure* in Geneva.⁷ Lerch's discussion of the Saussurean theory of the sign (1939) was part of this forum, one which involved for example linguists from Belgium⁸ (Buyssens 1940/1, 1942/3), Switzerland (Sechehaye, Bally and Frei 1940/1), France (Pichon 1940/1) and Denmark⁹ (Hjelmslev 1942) as well as Germany. Volume 2 of *Acta Linguistica* includes a contribution co-authored by one Swiss and two German academics on the Saussurean concept of the sign (Borgeaud, Bröcker and Lohmann 1942/3). One of the German contributors, Walter Bröcker, was professor of philosophy in Rostock, and a member of the NSDAP.¹⁰

The literature on the linguistic sign and Saussure therefore involved active Nazi academics (Bröcker), a dismissed German professor still actively publishing in Germany (Lerch), academics from neutral countries (Bally, Frei, Sechehaye), and academics from occupied countries (Buyssens, Hjelmslev). It also included the British linguist Alan Gardiner (1944).¹¹

This is not to say that Saussure was uncritically accepted in Germany. Clearly discussion of Saussure as a foundational theorist was more prevalent in Geneva, Copenhagen and Paris than in German universities. One critical voice within Germany was Emil Winkler¹² (1937, 1938), who rejected the 'méthode statique' of French linguistic theory (1937: 439–40) and promoted a view of linguistics as *Geisteswissenschaft* based on 'inner form'. This inner form was 'the surviving element of the creative linguistic act' which was left in language in its 'debased' function as a medium of communication (Winkler 1933: 29, quoted in Glässer 1942: 455). Winkler (1938) sought to characterize the difference between French and German thinking about language. He contrasted Saussure and Bally's view of language with the Herder–Humboldt tradition that dominated in Germany, and suggested that the linguists of these two nations are influenced by their respective mother-tongues. Saussure claimed in making the distinction between *langage* and *langue* to be defining things, not words. But, Winkler points out, the linguistic means to make this distinction exist only in French. In the German tradition the emphasis is on the unity of *Volk* and language, and on language as constituting social unity; French thinking about language, which has a much more extensive vocabulary, is dominated by sociological categories (1938: 48, 81). When speaking in general terms about language, the French will use the term *langage*, rather than *langue* (1938: 48–9). French linguistics is concerned with 'external form'; it takes an instrumental view of language. Saussure's sharp differentiation between synchronic and diachronic facts implies that the etymology of a word is irrelevant for the present. However a child does not learn a

timeless object; but rather inherits a living view of the world (*Weltbild*) from its forebears, one in which the accumulated experience and values are stored and which derives its force from the past (1938: 92–3). Winkler builds his analysis on a series of oppositions: in the German tradition language is seen as a living force; in the French it is a dead tool for communication: the organic *Volk* versus the mechanical *société*. In conclusion Winkler concedes that he may have sharpened the picture somewhat, but insists that the opposition is a real one. Remarking that academic communication has lacked its previous vitality since the war, he ends with a plea for fruitful dialogue based on a clear perception of differences (1938: 93).

This article can serve as further illustration of an interpretative problem. One can classify this article as ‘scholarly’; it is not a diatribe against the French. It falls into the general European discourse of national character, which was not necessarily polemical in nature. A related opposition is found, for example, at the conclusion to Santoli’s discussion of the structure of Italian and German: ‘The Romance sentence is more symmetrical and clearer, the German more diverse and “organic”’ (1942: 117).¹³ Yet it can also be read in conjunction with Hermann Güntert’s mission statement in the same volume (see discussion below), and with the wider folkist–organicist rhetoric of German linguists under National Socialism.¹⁴ Organicism was realized on a continuum from the abstract–philosophical at one end to the ‘folkish’ notion of *Volk* as ‘organic community of blood and language’ at the other (Helbok 1937: 196).

Linguistics is a product of organicism, and as such it stresses integration and holism, and has difficulty in dealing with the fragmentary, the transient and the hybrid. The organicism of Saussure’s *Cours* can be seen in the equation of the modern city with an unnatural disruption of ‘natural geographical diversity’. It is asserted that Brussels is a Germanic city (even though French is spoken there), because it is in the Flemish part of Belgium. Similarly, Berlin is classified with Low German, even though High German is spoken there ‘almost exclusively’. The *Cours* comments: ‘This schematic simplification may seem to distort reality; but the natural state of affairs must first be studied in its own right’ ([1922] 1983: 269). This attitude to the city, and the concomitant sense of the natural diversity of language, was shared by German linguists, particularly dialectologists.

In Germany, where the cities were of relatively recent origin (modern Berlin being a product essentially of the nineteenth century), the linguistic effect of the city (*Grossstadt*), or even the town (*Stadt*), could appear disruptive, or at least problematic (Bach 1924/5: 41). The view that mediaeval German towns were a dynamic cultural force had been argued by Fichte in his *Reden an die deutsche Nation*, and this line of thinking can be traced to Schmitt¹⁵ (1942: 226) where the town is seen as ‘the driving force of linguistic life, the countryside as the force for stability’. But

Schmitt was arguing against those who wrongly equate the mediaeval town with modern cities, not against the contemporary anti-urbanism of German culture. Bräutigam (1934: 248–9) argued that the town dweller is more careless about language and life in general than country people.¹⁶ Urbanization since the 1870s had led to a loss of distinctions in pronunciation, and Bräutigam was attracted by the notion that the lazy ‘town dialect’ should be considered a symptom of linguistic decline or corruption (1934: 251). The carriers of the town dialect are the workers and the street youth, while the middle classes have increasingly distanced themselves and look down on urban speech as ugly and coarse (‘*unschön und unfein*’). In the countryside people evince pride and loyalty for their speech (1934: 251). The survival and development of the urban dialect is due most especially to the street youth who impose linguistic conformity on their social circles and are also linguistically creative (*sprachschöpferisch*). The loss of the ‘t’ ending in the second person singular of the verb is for example an innovation. In this sense one cannot simply characterize the urban dialect as a decline, as it produces innovations and levelling. Bräutigam was unsure in the end whether levelling of forms constitutes a linguistic decline. He concluded that the urban dialect was more endangered than the rural dialect, since it was exposed to the levelling influence of the *Hochsprache* (Bräutigam conceptualizes the urban dialect as lying between the rural dialect and the high language, 1934: 249).

In a report by the dialectologist Anneliese Bretschneider on the dictionary of the Brandenburg–Berlin dialects (1940), a project commissioned by the Ministry of Education, the relation between Berlin and the rest of Germany, in particular with Brandenburg, was envisaged as complementary, as one of exchange. This state of affairs persists in spite of the presence of foreigners and transient visitors. Berlin has its ‘natural hinterland’, and as the commercial centre of the district its influence radiates out into the surrounding countryside. There is also migration to Berlin from all over Germany, but especially from the Mark Brandenburg. The city and the surrounding countryside form an organic unity, one that encompasses the contrasting world views of the city dweller and the rural population. The aim of the dictionary is to capture this complementary relationship, formed out of the give-and-take between the two fundamentally contrasting world views. Bretschneider was a member of the NSDAP, and played an influential role in the politics of linguistics in the Third Reich.¹⁷

There is in any case an intrinsic problem in making Saussure’s *Cours* the litmus test for adherence to objective or scientific linguistics. Saussure’s *Cours* is too open for co-option by a wide range of socio-political and linguistic theories. Saussure has been seen both as the harbinger of scientific linguistics in Germany, and the representative of Continental mystification in Britain. When J.R. Firth (1968: 154) criticized the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski for a dangerous

confusion between theoretical constructs and items of experience, he was speaking with the philosophical caution of the empiricist British intellectual tradition, one self-consciously suspicious of speculation and mystification. Firth refers to a ‘hypnotic suggestion of reality’ that leads Malinowski to give priority to the categories of analysis over the actual experience, to give inappropriate ‘life’ to abstractions. In a similar vein, Firth had strong objections to Saussure’s reification of linguistic structure (Love 1988: 149–50). In the United States, Bloomfield (1923) praised Saussure as providing the foundations for a science of speech, though their explicit philosophical positions could not be further apart.¹⁸

In the German Federal Republic in the 1960s and 1970s, some of the younger generation of linguists embraced the notion of general linguistics or *Linguistik* as a welcome break from the domination of the study of language by the national philologies, and they welcomed transformational generative grammar as an ideologically neutral scientific discipline, one which they could oppose to what they saw as the ideologically suspect neo-Humboldtians. This represented a further swing of the academic pendulum between the cultural and the natural scientific understanding of language and linguistics. In this sense, the German generativists were the successors of Paul, as Chomsky is the successor of Bloomfield.

The leaders in the revival of the *Organismusgedanke* in inter-war Europe, one which reached its height in National Socialist Germany, were Leo Weisgerber, Georg Schmidt-Rohr, Jost Trier and Walter Porzig. All of these linguists can be accused of moral complicity with National Socialism.¹⁹ Similarly, Römer names Fritz Stroh, Georg Schmidt-Rohr and Leo Weisgerber as the central figures working on a folkish conception of language within the concept of Nazism (‘der volkhafte Sprachbegriff’, Römer 1985: 163). Simon (1982: 30) describes the German linguist Leo Weisgerber as struggling vainly to confront modern American structuralism or formal linguistics (*Systemlinguistik*). Weisgerber had set up a dichotomy between *Sprachwissenschaft* and *Linguistik*: an opposition between modern structuralist linguistics, emanating in the post-war period chiefly from the United States, but with its roots in pre-war Paris, Copenhagen, Prague, Moscow and Vienna, and the national-cultural linguistics of *Sprachinhaltsforschung*.

There is however a historical irony in this story: Chomsky’s self-proclaimed Humboldtianism, not to mention his (qualified) Jungianism (1980: 243–4). Chomsky proclaimed his adherence to the notion of ‘organic form’ over ‘mechanical’ form in behaviourist linguistics, and linked his notion of ‘linguistic creativity’ to Humboldt’s vitalistic concept of language as *Energieia* (Chomsky 1966: 19).²⁰ Weisgerber in effect did the same, only from his perspective Chomsky was the promoter of the mechanical view of language, and Weisgerber the organicist (Weisgerber 1971a; 1971d; 1972).

One linguistics or two?

Maas (1988a: 254) argues that the simplistic juxtaposition of traditional, corrupt linguistics and modern, ideologically objective, critical linguistics is a ‘myth of the modernization phase’ of the 1960s, and that the time has now come for a new, more differentiated view of the relation between fascism and linguistics in Germany. To this end Maas (1988a: 275) distinguishes between a ‘folkish’ discourse and a discourse of race (‘der völkische Diskurs’ and ‘der rassistische Diskurs’) under National Socialism. But can we make this distinction? Was there one National Socialist linguistics or two? One or two forms of *Germanistik*?

The exchange between Maas (1990) and Simon (1990a) turns in part on the difficult question of whether in dismantling one myth one does not create another, and whether in arguing for a graded view of linguistics in National Socialist Germany we are not writing an apologia for it. Maas seems to be arguing for the historicization of the study of linguistics in the Third Reich, and for its context within the professionalization of linguistics in Germany; Simon for the necessity of maintaining an absolute moral distance.²¹ Maas argues that in some sense 1933 was not as dramatic a rupture for the university academics as it appears to us today, and could even be perceived by them as a ‘normalization’ (1988a: 264); nor was the academic study of language drastically affected by the loss of personnel (1988a: 266).²²

I believe it is important to define National Socialist linguistics as simply the linguistics carried out by German scholars in Germany or under German rule after the purge of civil servants in 1933 until 1945. While this does not offer precision, I believe it offers a much better starting-point than polemical attempts to isolate the ‘Nazi core’. Any attempt at a definition would also have to deal with the question of the emigré linguistics of the victims of the Nazis, which on a theoretical level cannot be neatly separated from the linguistics of Nazi Germany (see Maas 1992 for a discussion of these definitional problems).²³ A particularly extreme case is that of Julius Pokorny, the Indo-Europeanist and Celticist. Pokorny’s political and academic views – not to mention his anti-Semitism – would have marked him as a strong possibility for an active career in the New Germany, and he was outraged to be classified as a Jew and dismissed.²⁴

It is important to emphasize this at the outset, for German linguistics was until recently the dominant force in the discipline, and concepts seen in the history of the discipline as theoretical advances came out of the traditions that fed into Nazi linguistics. Simon has argued (1985b; 1990b) that to date the origins of sociological concern with language within linguists to the essays by Basil Bernstein of the 1950s is to neglect an extensive chapter in the history of German linguistics, one that culminated in attempts to organize a language planning body in the National

Socialist period. Simon argues that it is important to study these efforts, because they give us insight into the relationships between scholarly activity and political power and help lay down clear guidelines for our own thinking on such questions (1985b: 99). Pre-war German linguists were well aware of the possibility of a sociological dimension to linguistics. Within the German tradition, the existence of terms such as *Hochsprache* ('standard language'), *Umgangssprache* ('everyday, informal speech') and *Mundart/Dialekt* (Seiffert 1969: 95–9), together with inter-war controversies within sociology, *Volkskunde* and dialectology about the social origins of innovation, gave the study of language an important social dimension. This can be seen in the controversies over Hans Naumann's notion of *gesunkenes Kulturgut*. According to this model, the culture of the elite descends the social scale, innovation goes unidirectionally from the top to the bottom of society (see Naumann 1929; Weber-Kellermann 1969; Simon 1985b).

One area where German linguists were obliged to confront the nature and boundaries of German-speaking society was that of the so-called *Nebensprachen* (languages such as Afrikaans, Frisian, Pensylfaanisch, German and Yiddish) and of the related question of 'colonial' dialects of German in Eastern Europe. Seiffert (1969: 92) defines the term as describing 'closely related, orally mutually recognizable idioms', observing that 'quite an extensive socio-political linguistics was duly to arise out of Germany's variously motivated concerns for the cultural and ethnic rights of the German "diaspora"'. This linguistics forms the theoretical basis for much thinking in the sociology of language today.

The problem of definition can be highlighted by pointing to an article by Hugo Moser. This article was originally written in honour of Walther Mitzka's seventieth birthday in 1959, and concerns some of the basic terms used to talk about varieties of levels of language ('folk', 'high', 'colloquial', etc.). This article (Moser 1979) falls within the folklorist–dialectological tradition in German linguistics. Among the authors cited are Adolf Bach, Gerhard Cordes, Friedrich Maurer, Hennig Brinkmann, Walter Porzig, Lutz Mackensen and Mitzka himself. All these cited linguists were members of the NSDAP.²⁵ In addition, Moser cites Leo Weisgerber and Adolf Spamer, the former a central figure in linguistics under National Socialism, the latter for a time the leading folklorist in Nazi Germany. Does this (unremarkable) article lie in the tradition of 'Nazi linguistics'?

THE DEFENCE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Introduction

If one were to take the following paragraph out of context, one might place it almost anywhere in Europe in the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century:

An appeal to the intelligentsia of the world. All science is inextricably linked with the mental character of the nation whence it arises. The stipulation for the successful scientific work is, therefore, an unlimited scope of mental development and the cultural freedom of the nations. Only from the cooperation of the scientific culture – such as is born from and peculiar to each individual nation, there will spring the nation-uniting power of science. Unlimited mental development and cultural freedom of the nations can only thrive on the basis of equal rights, equal honour, equal political freedom, that is to say in an atmosphere of genuine, universal peace.

One might remark the appeal to a scientific universalism combined with a sense of the particularity of individual cultures, and perhaps categorize this statement as falling within the tradition of Wilhelm von Humboldt, one that emphasizes both the diversity of mankind and its ultimate unity, a unity of differences not a global uniformity. Different nations have different world views and different cultural traditions: to impose uniformity on these is to lose part of the heritage of mankind as a whole, since each culture brings its own particular insight, its own way of conceptualizing reality. Within this tradition, linguistics has played an important part, both in emphasizing the diversity of the world's languages and the need to study them individually and on their own terms.

In fact, as one might have guessed from the English, the original is in German. The first sentence reads: 'Alle Wissenschaft ist unlösbar verbunden mit der geistigen Art des Volkes, aus

dem sie erwächst. Voraussetzung erfolgreicher Arbeit ist daher die unbeschränkte geistige Entwicklungsmöglichkeit und die kulturelle Freiheit der Völker'. The English expression 'mental character' is the translation of 'geistige Art'. The text itself seems to embody the dialectic between particularity and universality found in the history of linguistics; it is clearly a translation, and as such it shows its particularity even while striving for general communicability (the document is also translated into French, Italian and Spanish). The passage continues:

On the basis of this conviction German science appeals to the intelligentsia of the whole world to cede their understanding to the striving German nation – united by Adolf Hitler – for freedom, honour, justice and peace, to the same extent as they would for their own nation.

These comments are from the prefatory remarks of the Vow of Allegiance of German Professors to Hitler, published in 1933, with contributions by Martin Heidegger, Friedrich Neumann and others.¹

This text can serve to illustrate a number of methodological problems associated with the politics of linguistics. An obvious question arises as to context. Once we associate the date 1933 and the name Hitler with this statement, it appears in another light. The 'Humboldtian internationalism' of the preface and the contributions to the *Bekenntnis* can be dismissed as hypocritical; the emphasis on the particularity of the German situation and the desire to be left in peace to build the national home as part of a desire to purify, to create a distinctive identity. One might feel impelled to look critically at the Humboldtian tradition within linguistics, a tradition which includes the work of Heymann Steinthal, August Port, Georg von der Gabelentz in Germany and the representatives of the so-called Sapir–Whorf hypothesis in the United States. This might result in a clear differentiation between the (diverse) views expressed in the *Bekenntnis* and the 'real' Humboldtian humanist tradition. Alternatively, we might seek to cast doubt on the respectability of that tradition: Humboldt the 'racist'?² If interested in the history of German universities, we might look at the institutions and names listed in the *Bekenntnis*. We can find names familiar within *Germanistik* such as Hans Kuhn³, Walther Mitzka⁴ and Theodor Frings⁵; as well as two of the twentieth century's most distinguished philosophers, Martin Heidegger⁶ and Hans Georg Gadamer.⁷ The universities of Göttingen, Hamburg and Marburg are particularly well represented. We can point the finger, or we can emphasize the complexities of the personal, departmental, institutional and inter-institutional politics that must lie behind any such document. In particular we are confronted with a question of definition: what do we mean by National Socialist in the academic arena? Which doctrines at which time? Was there a precisely defined

Nazi academic orthodoxy? To what extent should we seek to judge individuals and on the basis of what kinds of information? How can we take into account the historical context when judging, say, a work written in 1944 as against a similar work published in 1924? How much should we simply interpret published work, and abstract away from the external pressures under which all academics – to dramatically varying degrees – work and publish?

In the *Bekenntnis*, we can perceive differences of approach and attitude among the contributions. For Heidegger, the Nazi revolution meant a fundamental transformation of national being: ‘die völlige Umwälzung unseres deutschen Daseins’ (1933: 14). Professor Eugen Fischer⁸ of Berlin put the emphasis on the populist aspects of National Socialism (*Bekenntnis* 1933: 31):

A people’s state has been established, the new national socialistic state made of blood and land. A nation – under the influence of the genial personality of the leader – becomes mindful of its own, old dried up fountains, its national resources, its blood, its race and its soul. [...] A people’s government, in the form as has existed hundreds of years ago, has been made, grouped in professions, with men who know again that they are of the same blood, that one mother-tongue binds them together, that they have leaders who want the whole, but not seducers who stir up class against class, who blast a precipice between those who give and those who take, who incite avarice and promise things impossible to fulfil.

[German text p. 9]

This Hitlerian socialism can bring down social barriers and encourage generosity of spirit among the rich, even in the degenerate, materialistic, egoistical Berlin of dance halls and bars (‘das Berlin der Lustbarkeit, der Tanzdielen und Bars, das grosse Sündenbabel der Vergnügung, das Berlin des krassen Egoismus und Geldverdienens’, 1933: 10). The English version of Fischer’s text was the more explicit. It emphasized the difference between National Socialism and Marxism and attacked Jewish agitation against Germany (*Bekenntnis* 1933: 32).

Friedrich Neumann⁹ considered what was meant by the word *Volk*:

Now comes the decisive question: What do we Germans really understand by the name People? By people we understand nothing else but the companionable union of men, who by a common fate, have become united to a great kinship in order to lead their own peculiar lives in their native country which History has assigned to them. One stands for the other, each true to his office, which necessarily serves the whole. Each shall really receive his due, because each lives in harmony with the other.

Just because we desire the close unity of the peculiar people, we give to each individual the chance of fully developing his powers within the frame of the whole. Nothing lies further from us than a dictatorship from without, which is forcing the individual into a ready-made scheme. But, on the other hand, we cannot tolerate the fact that an individual out of egoism is disturbing the unanimity of our people.

(*Bekenntnis* 1933: 48)

Are we here in the Humboldtian tradition? Humboldt is associated with the ideal of the cultural development of the self, with *Selbstbildung*, but also with a certain determinism with regard to national character and the individual character within the nation. Neumann is concerned with a moral force, a duty to develop one's self in accordance with the whole, with 'die Geschlossenheit unseres Volkes' (1933: 27). However he rejects any attempt to impose uniformity on different nations, any form of humanism that seeks to level out national differences, and also any form of imperialism: 'to each his own' (1933: 28). This right to develop the nation to its highest form applies in matters of race and of style of life (*ibid.*). The unity of the West is a harmony between distinct ways of life, the unity of human existence lies in the harmony between the different voices of the great cultures (1933: 29). There is a world order in which each genuinely mature people ('jedes echt gewachsene Volk', *ibid.*) would have a place.

Notions of 'race' and 'blood' figured prominently in Fischer's contribution, less so in Neumann's.¹⁰ Was there a Nazi orthodoxy with regard to national identity, and did these notions play a central role? What then of Neumann? Or should we talk of two competing notions of *Volk* within National Socialist academia, one where race is central, one where it plays a supporting role?

What of the following statement?

The world consists of peoples who find themselves at different stages of national development [*Volkwerdung*]. These national peoples are God-ordained and have their preordained tasks in the plan of creation, which no other people can take from them. No people is permitted to claim an absolute status for its most precious values, and force them as universal and objective values on other peoples.

These lines appeared in the penultimate paragraph of a discussion by Hans Galinsky of contemporary Britain's 'sense of mission' (1940: 335). Again the appeal is to a 'Humboldtian' notion of human diversity. Any genuine folkish belief in national destiny, and thus the German sense of destiny must reject the British world mission. The ideas of Commonwealth and Reich are

distinct. The former denies recognition of the sense of mission of other nations, the latter grants it (1940: 335–6).

An important strand in these assertions of German national autonomy was therefore a critique of British colonialism.¹¹ Colonialism was seen as the attempt to impose moral, social and cultural uniformity on the peoples of the world, and German intellectuals under National Socialism frequently took on the role of speaking out for the oppressed, identifying themselves for example with the struggles of the Celts against English cultural hegemony.

However British colonialism was also a model for some Nazi visions of a future world-order. This would be one in which each race would perform according to its abilities under benevolent German hegemony. It was a vision which drew on and sought to learn and supersede the British Empire. For example, Paul Schultze-Naumburg, envisioning a hierarchical division of labour between the races of the world, argued in 1942 that British colonialism was pragmatic and business-oriented, granting a degree of autonomy to subject peoples (1942: 42–3); the Germans had been previously too much guided by their emotions in matters of policy. Only Hitler had taught them look at things in a statesmanlike way. Germany's mission was that of saviour of the world ('an deutschem Wesen soil die Welt genesen'), but that world would inevitably be divided into upper and lower strata. Only in a racially homogenous group, such as the peasant and warrior peoples of the Germanic tribes, could all free individuals be equal. In such a society slaves were always of a foreign race (1942: 44). Schultze-Naumburg also cited the example of Indian caste law (his view was that Nordic peoples had conquered the Dravidian population and subsequently been absorbed, though not without leaving visible traces). The terminology that Schultze-Naumburg employs, that of upper stratum (*Oberschicht*) and lower stratum (*Unterschicht*) was also applied by the linguist Heinz Kloss in the articulation of his vision of an organically stratified society (see Chapter 6). One of the immediate sources for this terminology is the work of Hans Naumann (Simon 1985b: 111).

'The struggle for freedom in research'

Alfred Rosenberg, one of the pretenders to the role of National Socialist intellectual leader, announced in 1938 the end of all universalist systems of thought ('das Ende aller universalistischen Systeme', 1938: 11). The occasion was a lecture at the University of Halle, the Martin Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, where the close relationship between the National Socialists in the person of Alfred Rosenberg and the University was to be celebrated. The lecture was entitled 'The struggle for freedom in research':

All universalistic systems, however they happen to call themselves, have one characteristic in common. They proclaim a certain single message, one before which all nations and races are to bow down. They lay claim in some form or other to a spiritual and moral leadership over the whole of humanity and then strive in consequence whenever possible for complete political domination.

(1938: 12)

Unlike Bolshevism, National Socialism does not seek to apply a universal standard to all humanity. Religious toleration will be granted, provided the churches do not encroach on the domain of the Party. Similarly, academic research is in principle free (1938: 12).

The notion that all science should be seen as necessarily international had been earlier disputed by Gustav Kossinna, who saw the individual *Volk* as having special rights over some areas of study, including Kossinna's own field, prehistory (Kossinna 1911, 1912, 1921, 1928; Baker 1974: 50–1).¹² This proposition, combined with a call for socio-political relevance, became perhaps the single unifying factor in the early academic discourse of National Socialism. The triumph of National Socialism was hailed as bringing 'new content and impetus' to German culture (Krieck 1933b); the new education system would be one within which narrow academic specialization would have to give way to a general accountability to the German people (Krieck 1933c: 32).

Ernst Krieck (1882–1947) was, initially at least, one of the most prominent professors in National Socialist Germany. He was among the few German philosophy professors who had joined the Nazi Party before 1933 (he joined in 1932), and competed with Alfred Baeumler and Martin Heidegger for intellectual prominence in philosophy. Krieck was appointed rector of the University of Frankfurt in 1933.¹³ Baeumler was appointed to a special chair in philosophy and political pedagogy at the University of Berlin in 1933. In his inaugural lecture Krieck stated that all cultural activity was henceforth to be subordinate to the perfection (*Selbstvollendung*) of the German people (Krieck 1933a: 8). In the inaugural article in *Volk im Werden* Krieck wrote of a 'total' movement, a new cultural front on which the struggle was to be continued, now that the political victory had been won (1933b).

In justification of why only Germans can teach at German universities, Hermann Haberland (1933: 35) made the point that those of other races would no more be able to hold a course on the German ethical sense (*Rechtsempfinden*, i.e. their sense of justice, of what is right and wrong) than a German could grasp Chinese ethics. Foreigners cannot teach German history because they inevitably judge things from their own standpoint. In support of this relativism Haberland reported the case of a Spanish professor of theology who had no concept of animals feeling pain

(1933: 36). Psychiatrists who treat Germans must of course be Germans. Haberland also had some general criticism of university practice. Too many professors simply read their lectures (1933: 36); the teacher should also be a leader, or Führer (1933: 37). They should set an example to the students of good administration and impartiality; professors should be active in research in their field and should not abuse the system by having their research papers written by junior staff. Much of what is published is worthless (Haberland estimates that only about 20 per cent has any value). A commission should be set up to review academic staff and those who are unproductive should be dismissed. The post of university teacher should never be a sinecure (1933: 37–8). Teaching methods should be reformed to stimulate the students, and the medieval practices of teaching hospitals reformed. For example, those patients unfortunate enough to be receiving third class care are often used in lecture halls to demonstrate illnesses to the students. This would not even happen in the ‘Negro areas’ of the United States. What would a celebrated professor of gynaecology say if his lady wife were wheeled out into the lecture hall and examined internally by large numbers of students? (1933: 8). Haberland further recommends the ending of academic tenure and the enforcement of proper academic standards (1933: 38–9).

Joachim Haupt¹⁴ (1933: 1) declared that ‘the German institute of higher learning has never been a place for impartial research; nor will it ever become one’. Haupt uses the term ‘voraussetzungslose Forschung’, which could also be translated as ‘research without presuppositions’ or ‘disinterested research’. The new ‘political’ university will be a place where the researcher can realize his talents. Academic thinking will be grounded in biological–racial distinctiveness and achieve a level of objectivity greater than the ‘liberal’ university which pursues an unobtainable ‘unbiased’ science. Research will be freer because it will operate with an awareness of the presuppositions that must guide it, and because it has a factually based and generally applicable notion of value (1933: 2–3).

Von Wiese¹⁵ and Scheid (1933) envisaged a racially pure, organically integrated, authoritarian collectivity, in which teachers are also leaders (Führer), and in which scholarship and education are ultimately meaningful not only in the university but in the society as a whole. Engaged and committed educator-scholars and students would jointly serve a common, national–political cause and the German people. They also proposed reforms in the system of examinations (the students should not simply be stuffed full of facts (1933: 15)), in the awarding of the doctoral degree (*Promotion*)¹⁶ which should be genuinely for an elite, and in the appointing of teachers to the professoriat, which should not merely reflect time served or age (1933: 16). The organic is juxtaposed to the abstract and the mechanical; political centralization is to be combined with cultural decentralization, a process termed by Krieck ‘organic realism’ (von Wiese and Scheid 1933:16).¹⁷

Other declarations on cultural educational policy were published by Hans Freyer¹⁸ (1934) and Theodor Litt¹⁹ (1934). Both of these scholars signed the *Bekanntnis* to Hitler and National Socialism in 1933. Freyer first considers the tradition of ‘*Volkbildung durch Volksbildung*’. This means something like: ‘the formation (reconstruction, building up) of the folk-nation by the education of the folk-nation’. He contrasts this traditional view with a new, political conception of the place of the citizen within the state. For Freyer the tradition of *Volksbildung* is mired in organicist Romantic liberalism, unable to deal with the facts of an industrialized Germany, and looking to the restoration of a lost social order without distinctions of class. The notion of citizen’s education is not the way forward. What is required in the current revolutionary situation is the recognition of the ‘political people’ (*politisches Volk*). This political people or folk is not a natural entity, nor is it merely a simple community of the like-minded (1934: 9). The concept of leaders and followers is central to it, and these leaders must be able to deal with the historical challenges that arise for the people.

Freyer’s political concept of nation and peoplehood is at the heart of the creation of the new social order, one in which the state is the superordinate power and in which political struggle and political activity are fundamental. This political will has been reawakened in the German people, and a new Reich is being built, one based on the concept of Führer and National Socialism. Into the place of the static concept of citizenship steps the dynamic concept of the political person; ‘citizens’ education’ should be replaced by ‘political training’ (1934: 10). This training is to involve concrete tasks and a new work ethic, including military service. The political service of the state demands the complete commitment of the whole individual, and takes in all aspects of education. The individual will fulfil his own personality in virtue of his sacrifice of it. Humanism has no role to play, unless a new humanism can be developed, a humanism of the political person. Pedagogy cannot hide behind a false autonomy (1934: 11): ‘This doctrine has always been false. Today this is doubly the case. That which educates is the objective reality of the state itself.’ Should this state be in the process of constructing itself, then it has the right to form the people within it according to its future model. This pedagogical mission is an absolute or unlimited right of the state (1934: 12).

Litt’s essay in the same volume of *Die Erziehung*²⁰ asks what role the disciplines of the humanities, the *Geisteswissenschaften*, have to play in the National Socialist state. The ideals of National Socialism impinge directly on areas of concern to the humanities, in particular in the tension between the poles of ‘myth’ and ‘academic inquiry’, (*Mythos* and *Wissenschaft*). Litt suggests that the new state will not be best served if it allocates to the humanities the role of simply supporting or confirming a predetermined world view (1934: 15). The German state need be in no doubt as to the ability of academic inquiry (*Wissenschaft*) to give it what it needs, but this

will only be possible if academic inquiry is not told in advance which route it is to follow. In understanding the role of the humanities recourse is often had to a contrast between, at one extreme, mathematics which deals in forms outside time and space, and, at the other, the humanities, which are immersed in temporality. The scholar, *Forscher des Geistes*, is required therefore to live as part of his own time and with a sense of responsibility for the forces that animate the contemporary scene (1934: 17). But this does not imply that the researcher in the humanities should become lost in subjectivity and be dissolved in the present. This would imply a surrender of independence of point of view. The natural scientists needs no such imperative; the methodology alone requires abstraction from the concrete. But the researcher in the humanities needs to be reminded that commitment to the present should not become a form of bondage (1934: 19); nor should the concern be purely with the individual. Generalization and a concern with the overall structure and nature of intellectual and moral processes is central to the *Geisteswissenschaften*. Litt imagines a ‘philosophical anthropology’ that deals with questions of *Geist* (1934: 20).

These questions pose themselves with a particular urgency in relation to the understanding of history. National Socialism, argues Litt, has triggered two contradictory impulses. The first looks to the German past to find echoes and parallels with National Socialism; the second stresses its radical nature as a new beginning, and looks to ground itself in an original or essential Germanness that is prior to or outside history. The renewal of Germany draws on this and looks on history as something secondary, the product of consciousness and *Geist*, forces and processes that obscure the instinctive and irrational that lies behind. In temporal terms this leads to prehistory as the ‘womb’ (from which history is born); in objective terms to the passionate search to discover in ‘blood’ and ‘race’ the original cause of the events and actions that we observe in history. The discipline of race, *Rassenkunde*, thus tends to marginalize history (1934: 21). If race is interpreted as a fact of biology, then the human physical type under investigation is seen as determining historical behaviour. Even if non-physical, i.e. mental or spiritual (*seelisch*), attributes are thought of as part of race, then these are all the more clearly seen as the key to the explanation of human behaviour and culture. History is seen as nothing more than the history of a ‘blood legacy’ or ‘racial inheritance’, or more precisely the maintenance or squandering of the inheritance (1934: 22). History is predetermined by racial inheritance; ‘the voice of blood’ is the key to everything historical. The conflict between a race-theoretical and a historical understanding of the life of the folk is not merely of theoretical moment. It also concerns how history is to be taught and understood (1934: 22–3).

Litt denies explicitly that history is nothing more than the unfolding of racial destiny. He distinguishes between the physical–racial on the one hand and the mental or spiritual (*seelisch*) aspects of human existence. While our physical type may be determined by racial inheritance, our

spiritual or moral make-up is the result of multiple causes. The first is merely lived out passively; the second actively constructed (1934: 24): ‘In other words bodily existence takes place, runs its course according to a predetermined plan; it is, so to speak, “lived”. Mental being has destiny, freedom, responsibility, it lives its own life.’ History is not experienced passively but constructed.

The *Geisteswissenschaften* have, argues Litt, an important role to play in the movement of national revival. Their role is not to provide ready justifications for its central concepts, but to clarify and to protect these concepts from distortion and misrepresentation. While sharing the sense of the great significance of these ideas (i.e. those of National Socialism), the humanities have the duty to turn the ready answers into questions which require intellectual effort in their resolution. Movements founded on passionately held beliefs and arduous struggle run the risk of becoming alienated from themselves (1934: 26). Litt (1934: 27) quotes ‘one of our political leaders’ to the effect that ‘[e]very revolution mobilises the masses and runs the risk of become hostile to matters of the spirit [*Geist*]. The forces of tradition and of the new movement must learn to respect and understand each other.’

For Litt, historical understanding involves not the application of universal values to objective reality but the confrontation of an engaged present subjectivity with a past in a search for plenitude and self-development. Each new present creates a new past in its encounter with it; the past is continually reborn (1934: 28). The task at hand is both the reanimation of the past out of the present, and the reanimation of the present out of the past.²¹ This encounter should not aim to collapse the distinction between the present and the past; it is rather a creative encounter that seeks to go beyond or transcend (1934: 30). The National Socialist state should not encourage a historical vision that looks for ‘doubles’ of itself in the past; the historical reality of *Volk*, its recognition of its own right to exist and its need to take on the fixed form of a state, can only be understood if history is actively engaged with (1934: 31). Litt denies that he is arguing for a self-indulgent individualistic liberalism. It is only through allowing scholarly freedom that the scholar will be able to demonstrate a sense of responsibility and duty, and a necessary and inescapable commitment to superordinate social forms (1934: 31–2).

In a footnote (1934: 25n) Litt delimited carefully the scope of his criticism, observing that his critical remarks about race theory do not touch on other issues and problems that fall under the category of ‘race’ such as national health, eugenics, and population growth.

What are we to make of Litt’s article and how are we to read it? What is the force of the qualifying footnote? Is Litt opposing National Socialism in this article, or is he attempting sincerely to reconcile it with philosophical idealism? Or is he merely attacking an upstart paradigm, a perceived threat to the autonomy of the discipline of history and the right of historians to say

‘what history means’? How can we distinguish between academic disciplinary infighting, and academic Nazism?

The Berlin professor of philosophy and pedagogy Eduard Spranger (1882–1963) recalled in his memoir that in October 1932, Litt, then rector of Leipzig University, had tried to get the congress of university teachers in Danzig to pass a motion condemning the behaviour of the National Socialist students. Spranger had opposed this on the grounds that there was a positive core to the student movement, even though its behaviour was often undisciplined (see Grüttner 1995: 46–7; Poliakov and Wulf 1983: 89–94). In a prefatory remark to the 1934 article discussed above, Litt recounted that he had been asked to present a paper at a conference in Munich on education in the National Socialist state, but that the invitation had been withdrawn.

Iggers (1983: 246), discussing German historical thought after 1945, argues that Litt who had opposed Nazism and Erich Rothacker, who had not, both continued to defend ‘the German Idealistic conception of history’, and that the National Socialists did not leave any lasting traces in their thought:

Once more [Eduard] Spranger defined the tasks of the historians in terms reminiscent of Humboldt and Ranke. More aggressively, the aged Litt in a series of writings engaged the ‘opponents of historicism’ and called in the *Historische Zeitschrift* for the ‘reawakening of historical awareness’. He once more defended the historicity of all values. History is not devoid of meaning. Within every ‘concrete situation’ there are to be found the values which fit the specific individual. The ‘Ought’ was never universal but always unique. Historicism had been accused of ignoring the search for the essence of human nature. But man has no stable nature; his nature is in constant growth and consists in his historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) [. . .].

But these ideas could be *part* of National Socialist thought, as the *Bekenntnis* suggests.

Reading the journals

German journals kept up a substantial output until the suspension of periodicals ordered in October 1944, so much so that Otto Springer, compiling a bibliography of publications in Germanic studies from 1940–6 speaks of ‘the surprisingly large amount of material’ produced (Springer 1946: 252). The academic journals of this period provide much food for thought and raise difficult problems of interpretation. How did different German academic journals respond to the radical changes in German society from 1933–45?

Dainat's study of the *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* in the Nazi period portrays an editorial team anxious to continue as far as possible with their normal work, picking their way carefully (Dainat 1994a). Dainat discusses the case of a manuscript entitled 'Über die absolute Poesie' submitted in August 1944 by a Swiss author, Werner Günther,²² which quoted both Jewish (Gundolf, Heine) and politically undesirable sources (Thomas Mann, Croce). On the one hand, the inclusion of a work by a foreign author was naturally desirable as it provided evidence of external recognition and the maintenance of international academic standards; yet the article did not follow the current rules. Rothacker remarked that it was amazing that Günther had sent a manuscript at all given the prevailing hatred in Switzerland for Nazi Germany, and Günther was risking his own reputation. Günther was liable to object to any tampering with his essay. Rothacker was in favour of speedy publication on cultural-political grounds; Kluckhohn wanted to delay. In the event the decision was taken out of their hands by the decision of the Reichspressekammer to suspend all periodicals from 1 October 1944. Günther's piece appeared in the first issue of the revived journal in 1949 (Dainat 1994a: 567).

The journal had been founded by Paul Kluckhohn and Erich Rothacker in 1923. Dainat (1994b: 103) notes that the editors had considered bringing out a special issue in honour of the events of 1933, but that the idea was too long in the planning stage.

Erich Rothacker was an engaged Nazi scholar, a member of the NSDAP, with links to both Goebbels and Rosenberg.²³ Kluckhohn participated in the war action (*Kriegseinsatztagung*) in Weimar in 1940 in which prominent scholars of Germanistik pledged their support to a cultural front in the ongoing war (Rother 1980: 294–304).

As illustration of the kinds of interpretative issues that arise in looking at the journals of this period one could take an article from the *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* by Max Ittenbach (Danzig-Langfuhr) entitled 'The symbolic language of the German folk song' ('Die symbolische Sprache des deutschen Volkslieds', 1938). This is basically a look at formal properties of German folk songs, an attempt to find an underlying unity. The last paragraph speaks of a special kind of symbolic thinking, and symbolism that is based on an underlying order, and order based on an underlying symbolism ('eine Symbolik, die auf Ordnung, und eine Ordnung, die auf Symbolik beruht', 1938: 510). Ittenbach continues:

The assumption is not far removed that this linguistic nexus [*Sprachfügung*] is an essential quality of the race that is the bearer of Germanicness [*Germanentum*]. This question would have to be approached through a comparison with the folk song of other peoples.

Another interesting case is Bernhard Schulz' study of the polemical use of language, 'Language as a tool for struggle: on linguistic form in the polemics of Luther, Lessing and Nietzsche' (Schulz 1940). The title is very much redolent of its period, but the article is simply a study in rhetoric. Only in the conclusion does Schulz turn to the contemporary situation. Why, he asks, does this essay end at the very point at which the struggle of the young German nation for and in the Third Reich is beginning, the very struggle that gave rise to the study in the first place (1940: 466)? His answer is that scholarship, for all its usefulness, cannot be a substitute in the present for active engagement. One might term this 'meta-engagement': effectively Schulz offers rhetoric about how rhetoric in favour of political engagement is not enough if the cause is to be served.

Are we to read these conclusions as *Stilbruch*, a point at which forces outside the individual break in, disrupting the integrity and the autonomy of the academic enterprise? Or as a piece of back-covering opportunism? We could perhaps gain the 'real' answer in the authorial background to the piece, from research into the biography of the authors. Such an approach looks for evidence of external pressure or the suppression of personal belief. It assumes that there is an organic wholeness, an authenticity of belief, to academic endeavour which is threatened by totalitarian governments. While it is of great sociological interest to find out about the pressures on academics in this period, and while such research does indeed throw light on problems of interpretation, we are in danger of invoking a counter-myth of the 'normal situation'. This is the notion of the disinterested professor, free from external pressures who pursues truth without fear or favour.

Ittenbach (1907–44/5?), for the record, was a member of the NSDAP and the Nazi Lecturers' Union, and his biography shows him to have played an important role in the 'scholarly occupation' of Belgium, in particular Flanders, as a visiting professor at the University of Ghent from 1941–3. His cultural activities in Belgium were carried out in conjunction with Himmler's Ahnenerbe (Hesse 1995: 389).²⁴ Schulz (1900–87), at the time of the publication of the article a school teacher in Elbing, was also a member of the NSDAP, having been admitted on 1 November 1939 (Hesse 1995: 678).

One journal that explicitly rejected humanism and engaged itself to respond to the National Socialist call to academics to fulfil their responsibilities to the community was *Euphorion*, *Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte* which became *Dichtung und Volkstum* in 1934 under the editorship of Julius Petersen and Hermann Pongs.²⁵

A key journal with a complex history is *Wörter und Sachen*, founded in 1909 by Rudolf Meringer.²⁶ The editorial mission statement accompanying the first issue of *Wörter und Sachen*²⁷ had argued that after a period of 'healthy' concentration on sound changes, the time had come to look again at the 'objects' to which words refer. By objects was meant not only things, but also 'thoughts, images and institutions'. While knowledge of the history of objects had frequently

been adduced in etymological research, it was felt that the domination of the ‘sound law’ approach had delayed a full-scale acceptance of their importance for the history of words. Given that the ideal co-operation of the study of language with the study of things had yet to be achieved, the journal would accept etymological studies that kept this goal in mind, as well as non-linguistic studies of objects which would be of use in the future. Linguistics was one of the sciences of culture, and as a *Kulturwissenschaft* its future lay in a unification with the study of objects (*Sachwissenschaft*). The journal hoped to encourage the study not only of printed sources, but of the everyday life of the people (‘Sachstudien im Volke’). Changes in culture bring changes in word meaning, and these changes should be studied in relation to this concrete context, not through speculation. The emphasis was to be on the gathering of material for a comprehensive cultural history of the Indo-Germanic peoples, but material from other sources would also be considered. There were no temporal limits on what was relevant. This statement makes quite clear that the term ‘object’ (*Sache*) was not merely to be understood as referring to material things or *realia*. However in practice ‘Meringer and his followers concentrated upon material objects, as being more tangible and more readily comprehensible’ (Jordan and Orr 1970: 64n).

The early contributors to this journal included Friedrich Kauffmann, Otto Behaghel, Otto Lauffer, Matthias Murko, Alice Sperber, Hans Sperber and Leo Spitzer. While the appearance of the journal clearly signalled dissension from the dominant Neogrammarian paradigm, the contributors were not necessarily agreed on how they understood linguistic change. Spitzer and Sperber for example were interested in applying Freudian theory to the study of word meaning and linguistic change, and in stressing affective, emotional factors, and sexual factors (Sperber 1912, 1914, 1918; Spitzer 1913); other contributors looked at ‘commercial, agricultural or material factors in change and acquisition’ (Catano 1988: 43).

Meringer died in 1931, and in 1933 Leo Weisgerber joined the editorial board. In volume 15 the journal used the opportunity to state that this betokened no change in its character.²⁸ It would continue to deal with general questions of ‘linguistic content’ (*Sprachinhalt*) and to investigate the role of language within culture. However the language of the editorial reflected the new influence of Weisgerber. The claim was made that linguistics as a discipline was fundamental to the cultural sciences, since it dealt with language ‘which is not only the basis of each culture, but in fact creates and makes culture possible’. The direction envisaged is much less historical, and the perspective is more theoretical, looking to Wilhelm von Humboldt. Given that volumes 15 and 16 contain together a book length article by Weisgerber, one can talk of a Weisgerberization of the journal (Weisgerber 1933/4).

The next landmark was the decision to begin a new volume count from volume 19 in 1938. The journal’s title became *Wörter und Sachen: Zeitschrift für Indogermanische Sprachwissenschaft*,

Volksforschung und Kulturgeschichte. The journal was now published ‘in association’ with Walther Wüst (the academic head of Himmler’s Ahnenerbe) and Hermann Güntert (1886–1948)²⁹ of the University of Heidelberg became chief editor (Iordan 1962: 404). The editorial board was R. von Kienle, H. Kuen, W. Porzig, K. Stegmann von Pritzwald and L. Weisgerber. The dominant personality was, however, Walther Wüst who used the seizure of the first issue of 1938 (exception was taken to a linguistic map in a piece by Stegmann von Pritzwald) as a pretext to bring the journal fully within the orbit of the SS.³⁰

Güntert’s editorial statement (1938) claimed an important role for Indo-Germanic linguistics within German scholarship and the cultural life of the German people, including the education of young people (1938: 1). Güntert reclaimed for linguistics the national role associated with Herder, Humboldt and Grimm, one lost in a decline symbolized by Hermann Paul’s *Prinzipien*. The attack on Paul was much more direct than in the original editorial statement from Meringer. Paul’s linguistics was caught up with the collection, classification and description of external reality, a methodological and philosophical narrowness of vision which had brought the discipline to academic isolation. The study of sound laws took place in a vacuum, where the specifics of national–cultural development and historical rootedness were ignored (1938: 1). The piece also includes a side-swipe at word-field theory for being too abstract and for ignoring the emotional aspects of meaning-relations in its pursuit of a purely conceptual logic (1938: 6). General linguistics (*allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft*), the philosophy of language (*Sprachphilosophie*) and universal methodologies (*Prinzipienlehre*) were to be viewed with suspicion, because of their claims to generality and their glossing over of the *Volkhaft* (1938: 4). The logical consequence of such humanist universalism was the invention of artificial languages: ‘we reject the humanistic ideal of humanity and individualism’ (1938: 2).

There was no such thing as ‘language’, only ‘languages’ with different developmental paths, structural properties and levels of achievement. Languages were constantly being remade by their speakers; we can view a particular language at a particular time as a static state, but this is only one point in a continual evolution. Language should not be studied independently of its speakers, it is not an autonomous system (1938: 2). World view and language are inseparable; mother-tongue (*Muttersprache*) is the carrier of world view, not the fictitious human language (*Menschenprache*) referred to by philosophers of language (1938: 3). The ‘folkish linguistic community’, not the individual and not humanity in general, is the measure by which we should judge sound changes, sound laws, rules and so on.

However, the key issue, looking at the piece historically, is its account of national difference. What are these national characteristics (*Volkseigentümlichkeiten*, 1938: 2); where can we find this national specificity (*völkische Eigenart*), national substance (*völkische Substanz*), national history

and so on (1938: 3–4)? What is the stuff of national identity? We cannot identify speakers of a language with the *Volk*, even though a language largely determines the way speakers see the world. A member of the same linguistic community is far from being *de facto* a member of the same national community: ‘Sprache allein macht nicht zum wahren Volksgenossen’. For each language expresses the particularity of a *Volk*, and that peculiarity is dependent:

on the much deeper acting biological powers which spring up from the depths of the unconscious, on race, on genetic inheritance (*Erbmasse*), on predisposition (*Veranlagung*), temperament (*Gemütsart*), territory (*Wohnraum*), on the shared history, all forces which determine not only the nature of a language but equally ethics, customs, notions of justice (*Rechtsempfinden*), world view etc.

(1938: 7)

Even if a racial outsider speaks the language and has therefore shares to some extent the world view of its speakers, he cannot be a true member of the *Volk*, a *Volksgenosse*, even if his ancestors supposedly spoke the language. For the influence of one’s racial inheritance is too powerful, and language is much less profoundly rooted in the *Volk*; it can be substituted or altered more easily than characteristics of the national psyche such as customs, sense of justice, world view, the life of the emotions. If such racial outsiders could have long-term influence, then they could become corrupters of that language (‘Schädlinge und Verderber’). The *Volk* creates the language that suits it, not the other way round (1938: 7).

Güntert then moves on to a plea for comparative linguistics, which can lay claim to the scientific formulation of the concepts of ‘Indo-Germanic’ and ‘Aryan’, and it is the duty of linguistics to trace and explain the paths of development of the Indo-Germanic languages. These languages are spoken by peoples who have dominated European and world history. The discipline can claim a global significance (1938: 8). The comparative method inaugurated by Bopp is still the central methodology for Indo-Germanic studies, and disciplinary boundaries should be no barrier to its application (1938: 9). Other language groups should be studied, not for their own sake, but to bring the specificity of the Indo-Germanic family into sharper focus (1938: 9). The journal seeks to be a focal point in this collective enterprise, one where the study of isolated objects should take second place behind more global studies. The journal will report on all areas of culture and in relation to language, including the nature of language teaching in school and linguistic minorities. Related neighbouring disciplines are prehistory, race research and comparative history of religion. So long as contributors bear in mind the central concern of the journal (the unique characteristics of peoplehood, ‘das arteigene Volkstum’), no aspect of the study of language is

excluded (1938: 11). Hence the new, broader designation for the journal (1938: 11). The radical changes going on require a new, more ambitious kind of academic journal, one not arbitrarily thrown together as in the past, but which offers a coherent picture of the discipline and its goals (1938: 11). The aim of Indo-Germanic linguistic research is to study the development and history of our Aryan forbears and to serve the German people.

In volume 9 of the *Zeitschrift für deutsche Bildung* (1933), Karl Viëtor³¹ greeted the new freedom from liberalism and the release of creative energy under the guidance of the Führer. This journal was the organ of the Germanists' Union (Germanistenverband) which became the Association for German Education (Gesellschaft für deutsche Bildung).³² This association affiliated itself with the National Socialist Teachers' Union. Thus with its 15th volume the journal became in effect a Party publication under the editorship of Karl Hunger.³³ It contains explicitly anti-Semitic articles (e.g. Kruger 1939), a poem in honour of Hitler's birthday in issue 4 of volume 15, and a tribute to Friedrich Neumann ending in 'Heil Hitler!' from the editors, the publisher and the contributors. In 1940 the journal published an account of a meeting in Weimar at which the topic was the contribution Germanists could make to the war effort and to the construction of a new European order ([Zf dB] 1940). The conference opened with an address by Professor Paul Ritterbusch,³⁴ rector of the University of Kiel, and a volume was planned under the title *Deutsches Wesen im Spiegel deutscher Dichtung*, to be edited by Franz Koch of the University of Berlin and Gerhard Fricke, also of Kiel University (and an editor of the *Zeitschrift für Deutschkunde*). This eventually appeared as the five-volume *Von deutscher Art in Sprache und Dichtung* (Fricke *et al.* 1941) as part of the wider project to demonstrate the contribution that the humanities could make to the war-effort.³⁵

The challenge facing academics in the humanities, and in particular those concerned with German culture, was one of confronting Germanness with the foreign, in particular with Western civilization as represented through English and Romance studies (*Anglistik* and *Romanistik*). Given that philosophers, historians and lawyers are also involved in this task, Germanists could restrict themselves to their own area of specialization, language and literature ('Sprache und Dichtung'). Volume 19 opened with an announcement of the death in October 1942 on the Eastern Front of Clemens Lugowski (professor for German language and literature at the University of Kiel), and an editorial commemorating ten years since the National Socialist seizure of power. The editorial talks of a war forced on Germany by its enemies, a war to decide the fate of Germany and Europe, the new unity of the German people in the face of its enemies (capitalist democracy, anti-capitalist Bolshevism and the Jews) and the certainty of victory.

In the *Zeitschrift für Deutschkunde*³⁶ (volume 53) we can find Joachim Müller arguing that literary criticism should be grounded in a racial and *völkisch* viewpoint (1939a), and giving an

anti-Semitic reading of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* in a discussion of the role of Shakespeare in German lessons (1939b).³⁷ Heinrich Banniza von Bazan (1939) in the same volume argues for the central role of the study of blood-related communities, *Sippenkunde*, in German lessons in schools. This subject is able to bring to life the German world view, grounded as that world view is in race.³⁸ Both Leo Weisgerber and Jost Trier were contributors to the *Zeitschrift für Deutschkunde* (Weisgerber 1940b; Trier 1942b). In 1943 the *Zeitschrift für Deutschkunde* merged with the *Zeitschrift für deutsche Bildung* to form the short-lived *Zeitschrift für Deutschwissenschaft und Deutschunterricht*, edited by Dr Karl Hunger, to which Weisgerber was also a contributor (Weisgerber 1943a). Trier³⁹ (1942b) echoed Herbert Grabert's optimism about the future of the German peasantry (*Bauerntum*), but argued that it need to be defended and that its survival was dependent on the nature of the political order (1942b: 214). He also greeted G. Vacher de Lapouge's newly translated *Der Arier und seine Bedeutung für die Gemeinschaft* ('The Aryan and his importance for community', 1939) as 'a classic work of race theory'.⁴⁰ Noting that some aspects of this work have become outdated, Trier concluded: 'But the pages that have remained valid are valid in an almost gripping way, for in them the spirit of a timeless nobility passes judgement on the man of race and on the formations that he gives himself.'

The dialectological journal *Teuthonista* (*Zeitschrift für deutsche Dialektforschung*) became the *Zeitschrift für Mundartforschung*⁴¹ under the editorship of Walther Mitzka (by then the editor of the *Deutscher Sprachatlas*) with volume 11 (1935). Mitzka, who became a member of the NSDAP in 1937 after an unsuccessful application in 1933,⁴² was head of the Abteilung für Volkssprache (Department of Folk Speech) at the University of Marburg, and the Atlas fell under the jurisdiction of this department. This name change seems to achieve both modernization and professionalization (the removal of the Germanophile *Teuthonista*), and nativization of the German academic vocabulary (the replacing of *Dialekt* by *Mundart*). In the application for party membership filed in 1937, Mitzka drew attention to the presentation that had been made to Hitler of sound recordings of the German dialects of the German Reich ('das dem Führer überreichte Lautdenkmal').⁴³ It was in this journal that Fritz Stroh elaborated his vision of a new, radically 'folkist' linguistics of mother-tongue (Stroh 1937; 1939a).

The journal *Muttersprache*, the official publication of the language purist organization, Deutscher Sprachverein, has been the subject of a number of detailed studies.⁴⁴ These studies show that it would be wrong to equate Nazism simply with radical linguistic purism, though this was the initial expectation of many of the members of the Verein themselves when the Nazis seized power. This simplistic view is offered by Grunberger (1971: 310–11), who speaking of the 'Teutomania' of teachers and professors of Germany writes that their scholarly productions under National Socialism

bore manifold fruits, from the discovery that the word-order in Heine's poetry reflected the structure of the Jewish palate, to the coining of German substitutes for words of foreign derivation (e.g. *Zeitunger* for journalist and *Zieh* for locomotive). These products of linguistic autarchy failed to gain acceptance, incidentally; in this connection, the antipathy of some *Germanisten* to the word '*Konzentrationslager*' (concentration camp) deserves mention: they objected to the Latin derivation of the term, and suggested '*Sammellager*' (collection camp) as an indigenous substitute.⁴⁵

On the assumption of power by the Nazis, the officers of the *Deutscher Sprachverein* looked to the government to take an active role in strengthening the German language. Simon (1979b: 155–8) reprints the text of a letter to the government from the Verein, expressing the hope that action will be taken in a number of areas, including the language of officials, language teaching in schools, the naming of children, products, shops, guest houses and streets. The language of sport comes in for particular criticism. By action, the Sprachverein normally meant the removal of offending foreign words and ugly or confusing jargon. While the coming to power of the Nazis seemed like the opportunity the Verein had been waiting for, ironically its leaders (e.g. Richard Jahnke) were less than happy with the linguistic practices of the Nazis themselves, Hitler included. There were even suggestions that *Nationalsozialismus* should be replaced with more homely terms like *Volksgenossentum* or *Volksgenossenschaft* (Simon 1979b: 158–9). In 1934 the poet Ludwig Finckh (1876–1964) published a spoof lecture in which he ridiculed the abbreviations of Nazi discourse (Simon 1989a: 65–6). The Verein made itself very unpopular with the Nazi high leadership, so much so that it came under direct attack from Goebbels in 1937. Goebbels attacked linguistic purists and theorists for not understanding that 'Germanness' comes from the essence of the people and is not derived from some dreamed up theory. This brought efforts at clarification from the Verein, and Dr Buttman stressed that the Verein was not to Germanize the vocabulary or invent new words indiscriminately. He also stressed that one could be an exemplary German without following the Verein in matters linguistic; nor should the goal of the Verein be seen simplistically as a fight against the use of foreign words. It was not the task of the Verein to create new words: 'the real creator of language is the mouth of the people, it is the poet, the speaker, the legislator, today it is especially the political leadership, the Führer' (Polenz 1967).

Simon suggests that Goebbels' motives were as much organizational–political as ideological, in that he wished to oppose Rosenberg's expansionism in this domain (1989a: 73). Critics of the Verein included Rosenberg's *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur*, as well as Theodor Steche and Ernst Krieck. Krieck accused the purists of the Verein of having a mechanical view of language, seeing it as a list of words, and lacking any sense of its organic unity. The hunt for foreign words

did more harm than good, and the Verein failed to see the source of the real threat to the German language. That threat comes from the likes of Heidegger, whom a contributor to *Muttersprache* had recommended as an example of excellent German. Krieck quotes some choice passages from Heidegger to illustrate his criticism (Krieck 1934a). In a subsequent article, Krieck accused Heidegger of promoting a Jewish-inspired nihilism, and took Hans Naumann to task for linking Heidegger's philosophy with Germanic myth (1934b). Subsequently Buttmann defended usages such as 'nationale Solidarität', and Polenz notes a decline in discussions of the question in the Verein's journal (Polenz 1967: 135–7).⁴⁶

Simon (1989a: 60–77) recounts the complicated manoeuvrings around a proposed official institution for questions of linguistic purism and linguistic standards between the Germanists' professional organization, the Gesellschaft für deutsche Bildung (previously and post-1945, the Germanistenverband), the so-called 'German Academy' (Deutsche Akademie) in Munich, and the Sprachverein.⁴⁷ Many in the Verein were unhappy at the prospect of losing their monopoly in matters of standardization, and also mistrusted a bureaucratization of language planning decisions. In this the appeal was made to the idea of language as a natural organism or a plant, which unfolds according to its own laws and which should not be interfered with by a 'linguistic police' (Christians 1933, quoted in Simon 1989a: 62). Friedrich Panzer, the chairman of the Gesellschaft für deutsche Bildung offered an analysis in terms of trends in modern linguistics, equating the 'liberal *laissez-faire*' position with the positivism of Hermann Paul. We have now learned, wrote Panzer, that language is not a 'work of nature' but a product of *Geist*. In particular, high language or literary language is the product of the conscious willed action of official, religious and educational institutions as well as of individuals such as writers and grammarians (Panzer 1933: 617, quoted in Simon 1979a: 63).

Eventually the Deutsche Akademie set up a 'language office' (Sprachamt) in 1941. Shortly after, the academy was made a public institution by decree of the Führer (15 November 1941), making the Sprachamt an official agency (Simon 1989a: 74–5).⁴⁸

Although the Sprachverein and its purists might seem to lie outside the history of academic linguistics, it should be noted that in this tale are mixed up established scholars such as Otto Behaghel, Ewald Geissler, Erich Gierach, Alfred Götze, Arthur Hübner, Friedrich Panzer and the omnipresent Leo Weisgerber. Behaghel attacked Götze's etymologies in the pages of *Muttersprache* in 1936, though his objections are methodological and factual, rather than ideological (Polenz 1967: 131). It was Behaghel's intervention in 1933 that enabled Weisgerber (at that time professor in Rostock) to join the committee of the Sprachverein (Simon 1979b: 159), even though he had not gained enough votes. Behaghel proposed that younger members be brought into the committee by the addition of three extra places.⁴⁹

Of particular interest are journals devoted to English language and culture (*Anglistik*), for example *Englische Studien*.⁵⁰ In volume 70 A. Schröer (Köln) attacked the over-emphasis on the teaching of French in schools, talked of a unique Germanic inner life ('arteigenes Innenleben') and argued that the English should be taken seriously as fellow Germanics (1935/6: 211). He spoke of a specific and joyful relationship of the Germanic peoples to language, 'die arteigene Freude an der Sprache' (1935/6: 217). The same volume had a report on the twenty-fourth conference of the German Association of Modern Languages (Neuphilologen) in Dresden by Karl Arns (Bochum). Emil Müller, in a review of Galinsky (1938), complained that the view of Germany in England had been determined by Jews and emigrants such as Ernst Toller, Emil Ludwig and Lion Feuchtwanger, rather than by the likes of Hans Grimm (Müller 1938/9: 417). Galinsky investigated the word-field of fate (*Schicksal*), concluding that such a study could shed light on the erosion of the Nordic character of the British nation (1940/1: 323).⁵¹ A tribute to Wolfgang Keller on his seventieth birthday by Rudolf Kapp (1942/3: 145–58) praised Keller's defence of healthy ideals against Baudelairean decadence, recalled how Keller joined the Schönerer-movement in Prague along with most non-Jewish students, and found the path to Adolf Hitler. Most interestingly Kapp discussed an address by Keller to the German Shakespeare association ('Shakespeare als Dichter der Deutschen'), in which a central role was claimed for Germany in the interpretation and dissemination of Shakespeare's work. Keller, says Kapp, was, like H. Güntert one of the editors of the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* and open to racial ideas and the importance of the race element. Kapp spoke of the disappointment of English specialists over the war, and of the need to destroy the bad England and win back the Germanic one (1942/3: 158). The last volume (volume 76) contained an article on the structural analysis of English by Otto Funke (Funke 1944), and a review of Wolfgang Stroedel's *Shakespeare auf der deutschen Bühne*, which was criticized for an insufficiently theorized account of the difference between Jewish and non-Jewish interpretations of Shakespeare (Sehrt 1944: 128–30).

The other major journal of English studies was *Anglia: Zeitschrift für Englische Philologie*,⁵² to which Otto Funke contributed a discussion of Ben Johnson's *English Grammar* (1940). Articles on England, English linguistics and the teaching of English are also to be found in the *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen*⁵³ and the *Zeitschrift für französischen und englischen Unterricht (Zeitschrift für neusprachlichen Unterricht)*.⁵⁴ The *Archiv* contains reports of the meetings of the Berlin association for the study of 'newer languages' (*Berliner Gesellschaft für das Studium der neueren Sprachen*), containing brief summaries of papers delivered and committee business. At the meeting of 23 January 1940, a lecture was held on Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, praising the book as the first for children with genuinely English content (ASNS 1942: 123). Other papers were less detached from the prevailing political situation. For example,

a Herr Schönemann discussed the United States' role as the representative of the Anglo-Saxon world and the possible application of the Monroe doctrine to the new Europe now emerging under 'Greater Germany' (October 8, 1940; *Sitzungsberichte* 1942: 126–7). The *Zeitschrift für neusprachlichen Unterricht* published studies of English political rhetoric (see for example Dietz 1941). Of these journals, the *Zeitschrift für französischen und englischen Unterricht* was the most explicitly committed to National Socialism. The incoming editor, Ernst Zellmer, committed the journal in volume 32 to responding to the challenge offered by the awakening of the German people and its new self-awareness (Zellmer 1933). While the aim of understanding foreign cultures would remain, this was not a necessary prerequisite for a consciousness of the particular character of one's own people.⁵⁵ The aim of the journal was to serve the education of the Germans, and to participate in the restructuring of education and modern language teaching that is to come. But what would the new curriculum look like and what will become of the humanistic approach to modern language teaching (*Humanisierung*)?

Essentially Zellmer rejected the traditional humanistic rationale for the study of modern languages. Eugen Lerch picked up on this question in the next issue, with a discussion of the importance of French teaching for German education (Lerch 1933a). Lerch suggested that many teachers of foreign languages were feeling a sense of despair, given the new emphasis on the German people and its Germanness (*Deutschheit*). But that despair was never less justified than today, for foreign language learning now had an important role to play in the political education (*politische Erziehung*) of Germany's youth. The task before Germany was that of melding into a folk community (*Volksgemeinschaft*); action of this united will represents the only non-violent way of throwing off the external load that is weighing down upon the German people. However German youth tends to resist service as a unit of the folk collectivity, and must be brought up to accept this idea. The German character favours freedom and diversity over unity, order and subservience. This is clear from German history, and the difficult road to national unity, which was half-attained in 1871 and now has been reached in 1933. While Germany has obtained political unity, it has yet to achieve confessional unity, and even its level of linguistic unity is less than in France. In France it would be unthinkable for the rector of a university to hold a formal address in his local dialect; political and religious unity was attained there to a degree by the seventeenth century. The Germans are more individualistic than the French; one could say the Germanic peoples are more so than the Romance peoples. This explains the Germans feeling of tribal affinity (*Stammverwandt*) with England; but also why, in the current situation in which a constraint on freedom is required, it is to French culture that we need to look. Students need to be taught that character is more than individuality; that the individual who refuses to submit to the collective is a threat to the life of the community.

The central point in Lerch's cultural-historical survey of France and Germany is that the German nation developed late. The solution is for the Germans to look to Christianity, classical antiquity and classical French culture for models; this will not lead to self-alienation, for the German's natural character will not be lost. However the Germans should not only pick out those elements of foreign cultures with which they have an affinity, for this will lead to a strengthening of German individualism. That is why French culture has more to offer than English. In particular the eighteenth century of French classical drama: Corneille, Racine and Molière. Of these Corneille is the most important: no German pupil should leave school without having read *Le Cid*; as Goethe pointed out to Eckerman, Corneille was the writer most capable of forming heroic souls. That is why Napoleon, who needed a nation of heroes, said that if Corneille were alive he would make him a prince (Lerch 1933a: 199).⁵⁶

Walther von Wartburg argued on similar lines when he claimed that the French language was perhaps inferior to German in respect of its ability to express the inner world of the individual, but that it came into its own in the expression of social cohesion. Thus French linguists tended to emphasize language as an instrument of group communication, and to downplay the individual aspect. No French writer has done for French what Shakespeare achieved for English and Dante for Italian. The creative energy of these two languages was realized in individual geniuses; in the case of French it was realized in an entire social stratum (Wartburg 1934: 47).⁵⁷

Volume 34 of the *Zeitschrift für neusprachlichen Unterricht* contains a revealing article explaining how German lessons can be used to teach the pupils of an English public school (Dulwich College) about Hitler and National Socialist Germany (Steger 1935). Willy Casper (1942) used the text of *Mein Kampf* to illustrate problems in translating between German and English.

One general trend in academic publications about Britain was an increasing emphasis on Celtic subjects. For example, volume 35 of the *Zeitschrift für neusprachlichen Unterricht* (1936) featured essays on Celtic topics by M. Liddell and Karl Arns. Arns later gave a favourable notice to Leo Weisgerber's book on the Celts in the British Isles (1942).⁵⁸

Romance linguistics was home to a form of 'racial stylistics', represented by Edgar Glässer and Alex Niederstenbruch. Niederstenbruch published in the *Zeitschrift für neusprachlichen Unterricht* (1939, 1940a), as well as producing a short book on the racial characteristics of the English language (1940b). Glässer published in *Wörter und Sachen* (1938), and in the *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur* (1939a, 1939b, 1940). Glässer's general account of race-based linguistics was published in 1939 (Glässer 1939c). In 1936 the *Neuphilologische Monatsschrift*⁵⁹ published an appreciation of Gobineau's racial theories as anticipating National Socialism by Rudolf Brummer, a student of Fritz Neubert at the University of Breslau (Brummer 1936). This race-based linguistics appears on inspection to be the linguistics of national character

with a more explicit accent on race; languages are seen as imbued with the same characteristics as the people that speak them: ‘symmetry’, ‘warmth’, ‘individualism’, ‘order’ etc. (Niederstenbruch 1941: 35).⁶⁰ Group or individual styles can be seen as reflecting different aspects of racial inheritance. According to Niederstenbruch, the style of the English Romantics reflected Nordic influence characterized by individual freedom and the reconciliation of opposites; other racial tendencies (from the influence of ‘die westische Hauptrasse’) involve a drive to order and regularity of form (1940a: 127). Glässer’s discussion of race and style in relation to Alphonse de Lamartine begins with a description of Lamartine in terms of his character as an individual and temperament as well as racial type (drawing on categories from H.F.K. Günther), summed up in the formula: ‘Lamartine – an Aryan poet’ (1939a: 129). Glässer has served as a convenient ‘fall-guy’ in various accounts of Nazi linguistics, but his ‘racial’ linguistics was no more or less chauvinist than the ‘mother-tongue’ linguistics of Kloss and Weisgerber. In academic–political terms, this ‘race linguistics’ was marginal, and the central position was occupied by the linguistics of *Sprachinhaltsforschung* (Simon 1985b: 100). While it sought to be in tune with the ‘new’ science of race, it was regarded by many academic linguists as a discredited set of generalizations about national character.

During the war Fritz Neubert spoke of the achievements of German *Romanistik* in maintaining scholarly standards and objectivity, noting that this objectivity had been maintained even in the spring of 1940, when war against France was still raging and Professor Paul Ritterbusch’s call went out for German *Geisteswissenschaftler* to contribute to the war effort (1944: 243). After two extremely harmonious meetings in Berlin and Weimar the overall theme was arrived at: ‘France, its world view (*Weltbild*) and Europe’ (1944: 244).⁶¹ These meetings were held on 17 and 18 May in Berlin, and 29 and 30 November in Weimar. Among the speakers on the opening day were Neubert himself, Heinrich Harmjanz and Karl Ritterbusch (Brummer 1941).

The *Germanisch–Romanische Monatsschrift*⁶² of the war years contains a number of articles of particular interest. Hertha Marquardt, *Dozentin* in English philology at the University of Göttingen, drew conclusions about the English national character from a sketch of the history of the English vocabulary. The English are open to foreign influence and are able to integrate alien elements into their language and culture; English has lost its identity as a pure Germanic language. Indeed, we have seen recently just how willing the English are to take in foreigners! (1942: 274). But the outsider must adapt to English ways. Long polysyllabic borrowings are shortened to monosyllables by the pragmatic English, a feature which gives the English language a certain energy, even a ‘manly’ quality according to Jespersen (Marquardt 1942: 284). This, combined with the international character of its vocabulary and its drastically simplified grammar, had seemingly fitted English to be a world language, and these qualities came into their own during the

rapid rise of England in the nineteenth century. Whether things will change as a result of the present political events only time will tell. Marquardt concluded with a discussion of the humour that the English had extracted out of the German expression ‘Gott strafe England’ (‘God punish England’) during the First World War. They had inverted it into a nickname for the Germans: the ‘Gottstrafer’, and the word ‘strafe’ had become a ‘comic word’. However whether this word would remain comic for the English in the present war remains to be seen (1942: 285).

The next volume of the *Monatsschrift* contained a philosophical discussion of the relation of *Geist* to language by the Herder scholar Gustav Konrad (1943),⁶³ one that drew on German idealist philosophy (in particular Hegel, Dilthey) and the work of Theodor Litt, Hans Freyer and Martin Heidegger. While this essay was written in the highly abstract language of the German idealist tradition, its basic message was in tune with many contemporary writings. It had the theological reverence for language that is found in the writings of the ‘mother-tongue’ linguists, the same insistence that language is not merely form (1943: 122), not simply a tool for communication (1943: 127), not an ‘available tool’ (Heidegger); the same insistence on finding meaning and value in the unfolding of history, and on the special place of language as a means of revelation within that, as the mirror of *Geist* (‘language is therefore *Geist* and history and both simultaneously’). But as much as it is the history of *Geist*, it is also the *Geist* of history, 1943: 127); an insistence that language is not the creation of one generation (1943: 124), that it carries with it the accumulated wisdom of previous generations (1943: 125); the vitalistic and organicist vocabulary, the evocation of creative energy and achievement (*Leistung*). However the word *Volk* does not appear; the dialectal opposition is between the individual and humanity, not between the individual and the *Volk* (1943: 126). The term *Gemeinschaft* (‘community’) appears; and the inter-relatedness of all phenomena – language, law, custom, society and state – is evoked (1943: 120–1).

One could contrast this article to Fritz Stroh’s brief essay ‘The *Volk* and its language’ (1939b), in which the same rejection of a materialistic view of language can be found. Stroh rejects the reduction of language to its form properties, to ‘a measurable thing, to a mere sound-structure (*Schallgebilde*)’, and speaks of language in vitalistic terms, of its contribution (*Leistung*) to the community (1939b: 1) and power (*Kraft*). It is not merely a means of communication, but a means of grasping and structuring reality. Order is plucked out of the chaos of events and experiences, and a meaningful structure set up. This ordering is not value-free; it expresses the knowledge acquired by the linguistic community in the course of time. However this linguistic order is subjective; it does not arise out of the nature of things, but is created by the folkish community, and that community is a biological one bound by a common blood (*Blut*) and a joint destiny (*Schicksal*). The achievement of the mother-tongue is to pass this conceptual world from one

generation to the next. The ‘marriage-bed’ decides if a particular people will multiply; the children’s playground and the school – the transmitters of mother-tongue – whether this biological gain will be retained by the people in question. Stroh also saw language in sociological terms, talking of the need to research the dialects and to uncover the treasures that their world views have to offer, particular in the area of folk-taxonomies. These included terms for plants which reflect not scientific categorizations but the needs of the speakers (1939b: 2).

In the same edition of the *Monatsschrift* there appeared the text of the inaugural lecture held by Hermann Flasdieck on his assumption of the chair in English philology at the University of Köln (Flasdieck 1943). This lecture consist of an informative, if damning, survey of English contributions to linguistics (or the lack of them). Flasdieck claims political relevance for the lecture, which ends on a note of defiant pride in the tradition of German linguistics amidst the falling bombs (1943: 184). Flasdieck, in common with many of his ‘innovative’ contemporaries, was an opponent of materialism in linguistics, but also of ‘static–descriptive–synchronic’ linguistics on French–Swiss lines. Flasdieck defines the philologist’s interest in language as being subordinate to questions of interpretation; the linguist, on the other hand, studies language as an end in itself (1943: 169), but argues that this distinction is potentially harmful to both disciplines. While linguistics has been accused of being an ivory tower discipline, it is in its concern with the word – in contrast with grammar – the foundation of all the humanities (*Kulturwissenschaften*).

For Flasdieck the rejection of Neogrammarian materialism and of synchronic linguistics leaves linguistics as a historical discipline, but one which studies history dynamically, as the evolution of Geist, concerned with meaning in history and in human behaviour (*Sinn*). But, he says, science is international and knows no boundaries, so how has England reacted to the newly revived linguistics? The English national character, with its egoism, pragmatism, individualism, materialism and utilitarianism (1943: 178, 181, 182) is simply unsuited to the new organicist linguistics. England was unable to grasp the intellectual message of German idealism, out of which this linguistics emerged. The notion of language that it embodies is too abstract, and it derives from the ‘folkish–political’ (*völkisch–politisch*) understanding that all areas of inquiry are subsumed in national character. English linguists have no interest in their own mother-tongue as a living entity (1943: 174). They are concerned with its past, not its present (1943: 178). English insularity and self-righteousness also leads to a neglect of the living languages of other nations (1943: 178–9); they are indifferent to things Celtic and Germanic (1943: 179).

Given that all scholarship reflects national character and that linguistics is perhaps ‘the most German of all the disciplines’, it is no surprise that linguistics has failed to take root in England. The poverty of English contributions to linguistic (and philosophical) scholarship reflects their outsider status within Europe (1943: 183–4).

Articles on linguistic topics can be found in large numbers in *Volk im Werden*, edited by Ernst Krieck. These tend to focus on language issues in the school curriculum, on language purism and on generalities about the links between language and *Volk*. Other explicitly pro-Nazi publications included *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*⁶⁴ and *Die Welt als Geschichte*.⁶⁵ Linguist-academics such as Heinz Kloss (1941b), Peter Heinz Seraphim (1940) and Gerhard von Tevenar (1936b) published their work in the interdisciplinary *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*; in *Die Welt als Geschichte* one can find for example a brief, but ecstatic, review by Hans Weinert of H.F.K. Günther's *Herkunft und Rassengeschichte der Germanen* (1935).⁶⁶

The more prestigious of the philological-linguistic journals, such as the *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*,⁶⁷ *Romanische Forschungen*,⁶⁸ the *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*⁶⁹ and the *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*⁷⁰ refrained in general from vulgar and overt celebration of the 'New Germany', though this is a difficult matter of interpretation. The *Beiträge* published Leo Weisgerber's discussion of whether the term *Muttersprache* ('mother-tongue') was of Germanic or Romance origin (Weisgerber 1938a), Trier's fascist etymological studies (1942a, 1945), as well as Werner Betz' account of the conceptual community of the Indo-European languages, a world view which was the 'common inheritance of the Aryan peoples' (1945: 275).⁷¹ Römer points to a piece by Gerhard Heberer published in 1935 as representing a serious lapse by the old-established and scholarly *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung*⁷² (Römer 1985: 81–2). Gerhard Heberer also published on biology and inheritance in the *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*.⁷³ The *Romanische Forschungen* published a study by Rudolf Brummer which depicted the life-and-death 'struggle' between Celtic *parium* and Latin *caldria* ('kettle'). Ultimately the resistance of the autochthonous Celtic form was broken down by the Latin form, part of a general process of Romanization which is still underway (Brummer 1939: 107). Walther Preusler published a polite review of Edgar Glässer's work on race theory and linguistics (*Einführung in die rassenkundliche Sprachforschung*) in the *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* in 1941, expressing 'agreement in principle'. Preusler took issue with certain details and complained about the cumbersome style.

These more prestigious journals are not represented in the annotated bibliography of 56 works on language specifically supportive of National Socialism compiled by Kämper-Jensen (1993). Kämper-Jensen summarizes articles from the *Zeitschrift für Deutschkunde*, *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, *Volk im Werden*, *Muttersprache*, *Zeitschrift für deutsche Bildung*, *Die neue Literatur*, *Die neueren Sprachen*, *Nationalsozialistische Bibliographie*, *Zeitschrift für Deutschwissenschaft und Deutschunterricht*, *Nationalsozialistisches Bildungswesen*, *Völkische Kultur*, and other journals, as well as books and pamphlets. This selection represents, as Kämper-Jensen points out, only a small proportion of ideologically loaded writings on language. She

includes works by prominent scholars, including Alfred Götze (1940), Ewald Geissler (1935), Friedrich Panzer (1937), Georg Schmidt-Rohr (1933a, 1939b), Kurt Stegmann von Pritzwald (1936), Fritz Stroh (1933) and Leo Weisgerber (1943a). Kämper-Jensen also lists a number of works which link Jews and the language of the German underworld (*Gaunersprache*), part of a long tradition of criminological linguistics directed against Jews (e.g. Deubel 1938; Krause 1937, 1943).

In this context a suitable case for study is the journal of Indo-European studies, *Indogermanische Forschungen. Zeitschrift für Indogermanistik und allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft*.⁷⁴ In the early 1930s *Indogermanische Forschungen* featured a number of discussions of Saussure's ideas (e.g. Otto 1934; Ammann 1934). Debrunner (1934) argued that the political revolution had laid down a challenge to linguistics to make itself politically relevant, and he took issue with Hermann Ammann, saying that we should stress the differences, not the relationships, between languages. The word 'Aryan', now on everyone's lips, was derived from Indo-Germanic linguistics, and in English it was still common to say 'Aryan linguistics'. This term had been taken over by ethnologists and researchers into race. Hellmuth Dempe (1934), while recognizing that the new triumph of the 'folkish idea' could not be without its effects in the world of scholarship, nonetheless rejected Hermann Güntert's 'folk-biologism' and conceptual relativism (Güntert 1932).

As with many journals in this period, the review pages are of particular interest, because they often provide an insight into academic politics, and are often much more clearly attuned to the Nazi revolution than the main articles. A series of reviews by Hans Krahe (Würzburg) show that there was room for disagreement about the location of the original homeland (*Urheimat*) of the Indo-Europeans. Krahe (1940) gave a respectful notice to Bolko von Richthofen's *Die Vor- und Frühgeschichte im neuen Deutschland* (1937b). This book, as Krahe reports, was intended to reach a general readership and introduce an approach to pre- and early history in tune with developments in Germany after 1933. Krahe's review is neutral in tone, but he is critical of the chapter on language, since it consists mainly of a discussion of the names of different periods and has therefore nothing to do with linguistics. But he praises it for its interdisciplinary nature and for its factual tone and clear language. Krahe also remarks without evaluative comment on the attempt to avoid all foreign words and Germanize the academic vocabulary ('typologische-chronologische Methode' became 'zeiteinteilende und formenkundliche Arbeitsweise'). Bausinger quotes an exchange which gives some idea of the intellectual level on which Richthofen was operating:

When the Russian ethnographer Kagarov accused German *Volkskunde* of applying

‘fascist ideals of the present to the past’, it was not a folklorist who responded but rather an ancient historian. Bolko Freiherr von Richthofen was more concerned with the question of ‘whether Kagarov was writing merely as an Aryan slave of the Jews in the spirit of Stalin, or whether he himself had Jewish blood’ [Richthofen 1937a].

(1994: 18)

Krahe (1942a), in a review of Günther (1935), disagreed with Günther about the original homeland of the Indo-Europeans.⁷⁵ The whole question is how the basic concepts of three academic disciplines can be united or reconciled. Linguists speak of ‘Indo-Germanic’, prehistorians of Corded Ware Culture (*schnurkeramisch*) and race theorists of ‘Nordic’. Can these three points of view be reconciled in a unitary *Volkstum*? Are the speakers of Indo-Germanic the makers of Corded Ware pots? Are they also Nordic? If we could say this, then the central problem of Indo-European scholarship would be solved. Günther does want to argue that the Indo-Germanic language was spoken by the Nordic race. For Krahe, much of what Günther says is interesting and well founded (in particular about the influx of Nordic peoples into the elites of Asian societies) and the presence of the swastika in East Asia (1942a: 84). Krahe also notes that Günther uses the terms ‘Arier’ and ‘arisch’ only to refer to the ‘Indoiranier’ and not to the Indo-Europeans as a whole. He disagrees with him however about the original Indo-European homeland. Krahe favours an eastern location for the *Urheimat*, Günther one in Europe. Krahe points out that Günther himself shows how the findings of linguistics, prehistory and race theory can diverge in the case of the question of the origins of the Chinese (1942a: 84).

This debate over the *Urheimat* is picked up in Krahe’s review of Günther’s *Herkunft und Rassengeschichte der Germanen* (1942b: 190). Krahe returns to the question of how the basic identifying criteria can be reconciled:

According to Günther (pp. 42 and 47) the Megalithic peoples were, even *before* the influx of the more or less purely ‘Nordic’ Corded Ware people (and hence before their linguistic Indo-Europeanization), in the main people of Nordic race. It does not however follow from this that the concepts ‘north-racial’ [*nordras sisch*] and Indo-European (in a linguistic sense) coincide as completely as widely held dogma would have us believe.

However Krahe has particular praise for Chapter 3 of Günther’s book (1942b: 190–1) where the role of Germanic (and Indo-European) custom, belief and law in the striving for racial health is elucidated. The agricultural aristocracy [*Adelsbauerntum*] showed a desire for racial purity, for selective breeding, rooted in a piety of Nordic type, one which meant an uplifting of life, indeed

of life as a body–soul unity. On the same topic, Krahe took strong exception when Grabert argued that anyone who wanted to locate the original Indo-European homeland in Asia had failed to understand the whole ‘Nordic’ concept, pointing gleefully to a logical inconsistency in Grabert’s own argument for a European *Urheimat* (1942c: 95).⁷⁶

Dostal gives the following quotation from the Viennese ethnologist W. Koppers:

if we direct our attention once again to the question of an Indo-European original homeland, it is clear that the results of this investigation favour the Eastern Theory (*Ost-These*). In view of such facts, it is obvious that there can be no question of an original homeland for Indo-European peoples in Northern Europe.

(1994: 258–9)

This, he suggests, was ‘an ethnological hypothesis [. . .] that ran counter to the theory of a northern homeland for the original Indo-Europeans, which was maintained by the National Socialists’.

However Krahe’s reviews show that there was no official, unitary National Socialist line on the homeland of the Indo-Europeans, and that there was considerable freedom to debate questions of this kind. While there may have been a strong tendency for committed Nazi scholars to identify the homeland of the Indo-Europeans with Central Europe (e.g. von Hoff⁷⁷ 1942; Thoss 1936), there was no ‘official party view’ of this matter (*pace* Polomé 1995: 271). There is a danger of circularity: X defended the European hypothesis, therefore X was a core Nazi (e.g. Hauer 1939); Y opposed it, therefore Y was in opposition to prevailing Nazi orthodoxy. The debate was ‘multi-layered, and the political dimension was not exclusively dominant’ (Linimayr 1994: 37). Furthermore, scholarly positions had been taken up long before the rise of the Nazis to power (e.g. Arntz 1924: 30).⁷⁸

Interpretative pitfalls

There are many dangers in attempting to survey the journals in this cursory fashion.⁷⁹ There is the temptation to go through and pick out articles, paragraphs or phrases that indicate National Socialist sentiments. This can lead to a partial picture of the academic scene, and give the impression that page after page of the main academic journals were explicitly devoted to the National Socialist cause. It also assumes that one knows what one is looking for.

There is a further, perhaps more insidious danger, namely that of reading too great a degree of normalcy into the period. Superficial impressions can be very misleading. Anyone who was to

read through issues of the *Zeitschrift für Keltische Studien* (*Zeitschrift für Keltische Studien und Volksforschung*) might conclude that Celtic studies continued more or less with business as usual in National Socialist Germany. In fact, Celtic studies was thoroughly co-ordinated and dominated by Nazi activists (see Chapter 5). Furthermore, one is apt to forget that institutions, journals and professional organizations were both politically co-ordinated and racially purged. ‘Business as usual’ was operating on partly expropriated premises.

An additional issue concerns the maintenance of academic standards. In a sense ‘business as usual’ was also a form of service to the state, or could be so interpreted or used. From a distance, we are tempted to see as collaborators or servants of the regime academics who perhaps saw themselves as privately subversive in small ways: a slightly unfavourable review of a ‘real’ Nazi scholar; support for the promotion of a ‘genuine’ scholar; the avoidance of any overt Nazism. In 1955 Heinrich Lausberg⁸⁰ praised Gerhard Rohlfs, the editor of the *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen* from 1931 to 1954, for maintaining objective academic standards and remaining true to the mission of the journal throughout the Nazi period. When it came to reviews of publications that followed the official line, these were characterized through well-chosen quotations, which even the smartest of the victims could not complain about, and were thereby pilloried: ‘the reader knew what was meant’. Lausberg attributes in this context a political value to the most honest kind of positivism:⁸¹ ‘that which is true serves the *res publica*’ (1955: 2). These issues are raised by Maas’ reading of Eduard Hermann’s essay ‘What has Indo-Germanic linguistics to offer National Socialism?’ (1937). While many aspects of this essay are clearly in tune with Nazi ideology, Maas argues that there is a subtle subtext, in which for example the comparative study of Germanic and Slavic languages is said to open the way to greater understanding between peoples (Maas 1988a: 268–9).

While one would not want to say that those who refrained from pro-Nazi utterances are on the same moral level as those who did not, nonetheless Lausberg – as so many others – relies on the unstated premise that one could not be both a Nazi and a genuine scholar. His comments read as if there was some hidden element or principle in philological scholarship that precluded it from serving political tyranny, and as if all that was required was allegiance to the scientific method.

Yet Rohlfs did cast a sceptical eye over the debate about the origins of the word *deutsch*, in particular over the claims of Lerch (Rohlfs 1942b). This scepticism is clearly preferable to the chauvinistic enthusiasm and history-made-to-order of Weisgerber, Lerch and others. Rohlfs was also capable of aggressive polemic against what he saw as the squandering of valuable paper. An article by Alex Niederstenbruch in the *Neuere Sprachen*,⁸² a publication of the National Socialist Teachers Union, was dismissed in these terms:

For ‘science’ such as this there is only one expression: race lunacy [*Rassenfimmel*]! And this kind of rubbish is being printed in a journal in war-time, while the necessary paper for serious and valuable scholarship cannot always be found. What would Adolf Tobler say today to such contributions to French grammar if he could come back from his grave!

(Rohlf's 1943: 61)

One could use this quotation to argue for a number of conclusions: that Rohlf's was a fearless critic of the ‘race linguistics’ of Glässer and Niederstenbruch, that this piece shows how marginal the kind of crude racial explanations offered by Niederstenbruch were to the linguistics of the Third Reich; that the debate (to the extent that there was one) about race in linguistics was as much about professional boundaries and standards as it was about Nazism; that Rohlf's was taking out on Niederstenbruch pent-up frustration he could not express against more important academics;⁸³ that there was freedom to criticize racial ideas in Nazi Germany, and therefore academics in the Third Reich should be held accountable for both what they said and what they did not say.

In this context it is worth mentioning that Glässer also came in for criticism, for example by Johann Lohmann (1941/2). However Viggo Brøndal (1940/1) published a review of Glässer's *magnum opus* in *Acta Linguistica* in which he noted that Glässer was trying to link linguistics closely with current ‘world view’ tendencies (i.e. Nazism), and that Glässer had raised the important question of whether language was a purely biological phenomenon in the context of a polemic attack against German Humboldtian idealism. Brøndal puts a question-mark against Glässer's notions of biological race, wondering whether race has an impact on linguistic structure itself or merely impacts on the level of speech and individual variation (*Rede*). In the latter case it would be worthwhile reconsidering the old but still relevant debate concerning ethnic substrata, one that could look not only at base of articulation, but also syntactic features within the theory.

Rohlf's' voice here is the voice of twentieth century academic linguistics, which came to reject the long European tradition of relating linguistic structure to national character. However Brøndal's review can serve as a reminder not to associate scholarly linguistics with opposition to race linguistics.

ACADEMIC POLITICS

Introduction

In this chapter a range of materials are presented illustrating the nature of academic politics in the Third Reich. For many, modern academic culture is ‘a culture which has elevated venality into the cardinal academic virtue’; for ‘social ambition and professionalization’ go hand in hand with ‘an absence of moral inhibition’ (Burleigh 1994: 4–5). If that is so, then academic life under National Socialism is a dismal – but not totally untypical – episode in an unedifying story of relations between the modern academic and the state, and between academics and power both within and outside the university.

National Socialism, unlike Marxist–Leninism, did not have an intellectual as its idealized ancestor; nor was intellectual life under National Socialism subject to the intense and paranoid scrutiny that Stalinism brought to matters of the mind.¹ This is not to deny that the National Socialists sought a total culture, nor that on occasion points of ideological disagreement were politicized. Threats, bullying and violence had been associated with the National Socialists from the very beginning, but to the mainstream academics and intellectuals who made their peace with the National Socialists after the purges of 1933, and lived out their private and public accommodations with Germany’s new rulers, there was no equivalent to the midnight knock on the door from Stalin’s *Cheka*. There was no equivalent to the near certainty of death that hung over substantial sections of the Soviet intelligentsia. The authors of a report on the *Germanistik-Reformdebatte* in the early GDR complained that many professors in the socialist state were proud of the fact that they were still holding the same lectures as before and after 1933 (Dornhof 1995: 19). For many German academics the dilemmas of Nazism were associated with their careers; for many Soviet intellectuals their choices were beyond even dilemmas of life and death, since at certain points it no longer mattered ‘objectively’ what someone believed or who they were (Conquest 1990). Fortunately for the linguists of the Third Reich, Hitler – unlike Stalin – did not consider matters of linguistic theory important enough for a dictatorial decree.²

For many academics in the humanities, the advent of National Socialism seemed to offer what they had wished for. It promised an end to their alienation from the state, and to demoralisation brought on by a series of financial crisis since the First World War.³ In this sense, their ideas are important, because National Socialism, while it had developed no consistent ideology, was nonetheless an ideological movement. Even if the writings of some linguists in the period 1933–45 appear ideologically neutral, that fact takes on a special significance within a totalitarian system.

Specialist studies of linguistics in the Third Reich form part of a larger body of work discussing academics and intellectuals in the Nazi era. Among the famous intellectuals and artists to come under scrutiny are Gottfried Benn, Martin Heidegger, Carl Gustav Jung,⁴ Wilhelm Furtwängler,⁵ Werner Heisenberg,⁶ Carl Schmitt,⁷ Hans Georg Gadamer, and Paul de Man.⁸ What is it we want to say about them? These famous cases seem all to be complicated and the sharp moral lines one might wish to draw become increasingly blurred as more and more materials are brought to light, and as relative judgements are made (X wasn't as bad as Y). But the perceived complexity of these cases as opposed to those of the rank-and-file of university academics is simply a consequence of the amount of attention they have received. Karl Vossler might be a case in point. Apparently the victim of the Nazis, he nonetheless was nominated for an important cultural post in Spain in 1940, and described in an official assessment as 'loyal' to the National Socialist cause (see below).⁹

The purge in the universities

German universities and schools were thoroughly purged in 1933, following the Law to Restore the Professional Civil Service of 7 April 1933 (*Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums*). These purges were directed at non-Aryans, communists, socialists, and liberals.¹⁰ For example, among Romance scholars, Professor Leo Spitzer, a Jew, was suspended from his post at Köln University in May 1933, dismissed in September 1933, and stripped of his citizenship in 1939 (Hausmann 1993: 9).¹¹ Victor Klemperer (1881–1960) was likewise dismissed on racial grounds from the technical University of Dresden.¹² Spitzer's colleague in Romance linguistics, Elise Richter (1865–1943) of the University of Vienna, eventually died in a Nazi concentration camp, as did Germanist Agathe Lasch of the University of Hamburg (Jehle 1991; Hausmann 1993: 188; Maas 1992).¹³

There was a strong ideological hostility to women professionals from some quarters of the Party. As Stephensen (1990) points out, in this respect as in others the Nazis did not differ much from the conservative right. However, new opportunities for women were later opened up by the

absence of men, e.g. from the mid-1930s onwards as students in the universities and ‘women continued to have substantial representation in medicine and teaching’ (Stephensen 1990: 281; see also McClelland 1991: 217–30). During the war, women with academic training took over editorial and administrative duties from men called up for military service (see for example the case of Kloss, Chapter 6).

On the National Socialists’ assumption of power, formal responsibility for education fell to the Reich Ministry of Science and Education. The federal system of education was dismantled in January 1934:

On May 1 1934, the Prussian Minister of Culture, Bernhard Rust, was appointed to the new post of Reich Minister of Science and Education and, on 1 January 1935, the two ministries were merged. The new Reich Ministry absorbed the educational responsibilities of the Reich Ministry of the Interior. From now onwards, the state ministries of culture functioned as field agencies for the Reich Ministry of Education.

(Noakes and Pridham 1994: 433–4)

However, in spite of this theoretical centralization, this field was the site of a series of power struggles (Noakes and Pridham 1994: 434–5). Peterson (1969: 53) concludes that in reality operational control of education remained a matter for the individual states (Länder): ‘[Adolf] Wagner in Bavaria told Rust to mind his own business.’

The law of 7 April put the seal on an informal campaign of intimidation against professors deemed unacceptable by the Nazi Student League (Noakes and Pridham 1994: 443).¹⁴ Between the winter semester of 1932–3 and that of 1933–4, ‘1,145 out of the 7,758 established university teachers were replaced, nearly 15 per cent of the total. [. . .] Of those dismissed, 313 were full professors. If one includes assistants, senior employees at research institutes, and museum directors there was a total of 1,684 dismissed scholars’ (Noakes and Pridham 1994: 443). Grunberger estimates the figure at slightly over a tenth of all academic personnel (1971: 308); according to other figures universities lost 16.6 per cent of their staff, technical institutes about 10.7 per cent (Bracher 1973: 338). Approximately 32 per cent of the academic staff of the Universities of Frankfurt and Berlin were dismissed. The University of Heidelberg lost over 24 per cent of its 1932 staff, Breslau 22 per cent, Göttingen, Freiburg, Hamburg and Köln 18–19 per cent and the University of Rostock 4 per cent (Bracher 1973: 338). The conservative University of Tübingen lost the least, less than 2 per cent. Gatens (1992: 33) gives the figure as 1.3 per cent (three members of staff); Noakes and Pridham (1994: 444) have 1.6 per cent. Eighteen per cent of natural scientists lost their jobs, ‘[t]wenty past or future Nobel prizewinners were dismissed or

resigned, all but one of whom emigrated. Eleven of these were physicists, including Einstein' (Noakes and Pridham 1994: 444).

University autonomy was threatened from above by the close links between the German university and regional and national government and from below by the radicalism of the student body. The rotating elected rectorship gave way to an autocratic rector with the power to appoint the Deans, an application of the so-called *Führerprinzip*. The final say in appointments lay with the Ministry of Education, which vetted faculty recommendations in the light of the rector's comments and the evaluation of the National Socialist Lecturers' League, established by Hess in 1935 (Noakes and Pridham 1994: 444). However the Party's influence on appointments and promotions was not absolute, and there was resistance within the universities and the Ministry of Education, even among Party members (Noakes and Pridham 1994: 445).

Under the Nazi regime, professors and lecturers belonged, 'more or less compulsorily', to the League of German National Socialist University Teachers (NSD-Dozentenbund). Originally part of the National Socialist Teachers League (Nationalsozialistischer Lehrerbund, NSLB), it became independent in 1935. Its head until 1944 was Walther Schultze, the so-called Reichsdozentenführer. From his office in Munich he controlled the Gaudozentenführer in each administrative district, and the Hochschuldozentenführer in each university (Samuel and Thomas 1949: 132).

Adam (1977: 2), in a study of the University of Tübingen, emphasizes that we cannot generalize about German universities of the Third Reich. The picture he paints of the University of Tübingen is of a highly conservative academic body, broadly in sympathy with the aims of the Nazis and their anti-Semitism, but anxious to retain its autonomy and independence from politics. Tübingen had very few Jewish professors, operating, it seems, a deliberate policy of exclusion. The case of the University of Heidelberg offers a stark contrast. Heidelberg was known as a relatively open and tolerant institution, with a substantial Jewish presence and a reputation for encouraging free discussion of ideas, the so-called *Heidelberger Geist*. Gatens (1992) argues however that an emphasis on collegiality and conformity had already eroded this tolerance before the seizure of power by the Nazis, in particular in connection with the dismissal of Emil Gumbel. This professor's involvement in politics and his outspokenness seemed to his colleagues to undermine the apolitical spirit and rule by consensus which they were so concerned to protect. For Gatens the dismissal of Gumbel was therefore a prelude to political co-ordination or *Gleichschaltung*, a sign that the university was unwilling and unable to protect its staff from pressures and attack from within (particularly from radical students) and from outside (on the Gumbel case, see also Gallin 1986: 70–9).

In an account of Heidelberg University under National Socialism, Vezina (1982) notes that the professors, while never consistently opposing Nazism and right radicalism, did not come out

in enthusiastic support. Only three professors signed the election proclamation of German university teachers of 3 March 1933. As in other universities, the traditional rotating post of rector was replaced with a system of direct appointment by the ministry. Other changes included the appointment of Hermann Güntert, a professor of comparative linguistics, to the post of dean of the Philosophische Fakultät, a position approximately comparable to Dean of Arts. He held the post from 1 October 1933 to 30 September 1937 (Vezina 1982: 132). The classical philologist, folklorist and Nazi activist Eugen Fehrle, who exercised influence throughout the entire university system, took up a professorship at the University of Heidelberg in 1936 (Assion 1994: 118).¹⁵

From Vezina's account it is clear that there were often problems in filling vacant posts, given that the candidate would have to be acceptable both politically and as a scholar. Following the retirement of Professor Friedrich Panzer, the holder of the chair in Germanic Philology, various candidates were considered. Bernhard Kummer of the University of Jena had the right political beliefs, but was felt to be too young and inexperienced; Jost Trier of Münster declined the offer. Eventually Richard Kienast was appointed (17 October 1938). Of the 241 members of staff, 51 were dismissed on racial grounds and 6 for political reasons. More than 40 per cent of the tenured senior professors were dismissed. Vezina lists the reforms pushed through by the Nazis at the University of Heidelberg as involving the offering of special lecture courses on key concepts such as *Rasse, Sippe, Volkskunde* and *Vorgeschichte*, the setting up of chairs in these or related fields (the history of warfare, early Germanic history, folklore). The study of law was radically restructured (1982: 166–71).

It emerges therefore that the senior professors who survived the initial purge were left to get on with their work much as they pleased, provided of course that they offered no challenge to the new order of things. Active participation in the construction of the new Germany was not demanded of them. Of course those wishing to play a role in academic governance had to demonstrate political trustworthiness, though how this was measured varied from faculty to faculty. However the aspiring generation of university teachers were required to show loyalty and testify actively to their faith in the National Socialist revolution; young Dozenten were required to attend a six week political training camp and to demonstrate a continuing commitment to the cause (Vezina 1982: 174; Noakes and Pridham 1994: 444).

Another factor of importance in considering National Socialist cultural policy is a sensitivity as to how Germany was seen abroad. The most striking example of this was the decision to allow the *Frankfurter Zeitung* to continue publishing as a quality newspaper, even after it was taken over by the Eher publishing company. Hitler ordered it closed in August 1943, against the advice of Goebbels and Max Amann who considered that 'it served a useful purpose as an example, if perhaps only a single one, of a high quality paper in a sea of mediocrity. It made a good impression

abroad and was a display item on the news-stands in Zurich, Paris, Milan, Brussels, and Amsterdam' (Hale 1964: 291). Leaman and Simon (1994: 466) similarly note that the reception of German scholarship abroad was felt to be very important, and any organization with claims to some international standing would be given a degree of room to manoeuvre in matters of ideology. Explicitly Nazi themes were also felt by the Ministry of Education to be inappropriate at conferences abroad.

Nazi policy on education had two basic aims: the penetration and control of the existing system and the setting up of a parallel system of training centres, schools, and institutes. Among these were the Order Castles (Ordensburgen), the National Political Education Institutes (Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten, the Napolas), the Adolf Hitler Schools (AHS) and Rosenberg's Advanced Schools (Hohe Schulen), one of which was opened in Frankfurt am Main (Bracher 1973: 330–1). This parallel domain was one in which Rust and Schirach in particular were rivals (Burleigh and Wippermann 1991: 215–20).

The universities were in general a disappointment to the Nazis, and attempts to build a parallel set of research and teaching institutions remained without any central co-ordination. That said, it would be wrong to portray academics as a sullen, uncooperative set of 'inner exiles'. Many professors played active roles in the new state, but often outside their universities. The Nazi leadership's attitude to the universities reflected a wider suspicion of the institutions of the old order and the Beamtentum in particular. Radical elements within the Party, as well as opportunistic power-seekers, were impatient with them as an entrenched power and privileged group (Peterson 1969: 87), concluding that despite all the bullying and spying 'it is questionable whether the party really won'. Following Mommsen (1966: 121–2), Peterson (1969: 101–2) describes the ministerial civil servants as having defended a degree of administrative integrity, 'but there occurred in the process the internal undermining (*Aushöhlung*) of their power by the gradual sapping of the moral fibre of the individual Beamter and of the rational framework of the group'.

In discussing the political co-ordination of the universities we should bear in mind that the acquisition of new territory with the passing of time brought many universities within the purview of the Reich.¹⁶ In Poland the Nazis were intent on exterminating the Polish intelligentsia, and carried out the notorious *Sonderaktion Krakau* against the staff of the Jagiellonian University in 1939.¹⁷ In Austria the process of *Gleichschaltung* was a continuation of the policies followed in pre-Anschluss Germany. Three 'Reich Universities' were set up: Prague (November 1939), Posen (April, 1941) with chairs in race policy, Jewish history, border and ethnic Germanism and Germanic folk music, and Strassburg (November 1941; Bracher 1973: 341–2; Deichmann 1995: 33). After student unrest in Czechoslovakia a decree ordering the closing of all Czech universities for three years was issued by the Reichsprotektor of Czechoslovakia, Constantin von Neurath

(11 November 1939). Nine students were executed (Davidson 1966: 171). In Norway the Ahnenerbe carried out a 'Germanic Scholarly Occupation' (*Germanischer Wissenschaftseinsatz*) under Professor Hans Schwalm,¹⁸ against which there was a revolt at the University of Oslo in December 1943. Six hundred and fifty professors and students were brought to Germany for re-education, of whom 492 survived (Oesterle 1994: 236–9). In a letter to Schwalm dated 2 June 1942 Sievers had noted that the SS would increasingly dominate activities in the Germanic countries, and that he was looking for someone who could recruit and groom a local academic in each country to work with the Ahnenerbe. 'Can I count on you, at least for a certain period?', he asked Schwalm.¹⁹

Gleichschaltung and cultural policy

Writings on the social history of the Third Reich have increasingly emphasized that the National Socialist State, although totalitarian, was far from monolithic. The Nazi regime is depicted by the German historian Joachim Fest as both ruthless and disorganized, with competition between different official agencies taking place below an increasingly withdrawn Hitler. The Führer encouraged rivalries as part of a policy of divide and rule, but also had little patience for the minutiae of government: 'Contrary to the widespread idea that the power structures of totalitarian systems are monolithically compact, they are for the most part structurally chaotic. [. . .] In the savage struggles for power before Hitler's throne everyone was at some time or other against everyone: Göring against Goebbels, Goebbels against Rosenberg, Rosenberg against Ley [. . .] and Bormann, Bormann against Frank, Frank against Himmler, and all against all' (Fest 1970: 452). Most historians now regard the Nazi state 'not as a well-oiled machine but a chaotic and stunningly inefficient political system in which competing organizations were engaged in a desperate struggle to expand their influence and power at each other's expense' (Bessel 1987: xvii). Albert Speer (1995: 295) observed that Hitler 'did not like establishing clear lines of jurisdiction. Sometimes he deliberately assigned bureaus or individuals the same or similar tasks. "That way", he used to say, "the stronger one does the job"'. This way of thinking about the Nazi regime can be traced back to Franz Neumann's 'cartel model' of the Nazi state, one which portrayed it as made up of power blocks alternating between co-operation and antagonism (Neumann 1942; Renneberg and Walker 1994a).

Schütz (1995: 129) argues that the Nazi regime was 'Janus-faced' in cultural matters. On the one hand the authorities took effective control of the whole media and suppressed Jews, socialists and the avant-garde. On the other, elements of the 'critical', 'decadent' and avant-garde cultural activities continued somehow to function in modified form, provided they professed loyalty to

the authorities. This apparent freedom was partly a consequence of the competition between different power centres within the regime. But it also reflected the development of a 'modern' consumer society with social mobility and a leisure industry, one that – in this respect – paralleled the economic miracle of the FRG in the 1960s (Schütz 1995: 130).

The major players in the realm of culture among the Nazi leadership were Goebbels, Himmler and Rosenberg, but Philip Bouhler, Robert Ley and Martin Bormann also took part in the ceaseless jockeying for position. The establishment of the Reich Chamber of Culture (Reichskulturkammer) in a law promulgated on 22 September 1933 represented a victory for Goebbels over Alfred Rosenberg, who before 1933 had held responsibility for cultural matters, especially through his Combat League for German Culture (Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur). Goebbels became head of the Reich Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda (Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda), president of the Reich Chamber of Culture (Reichskulturkammer) and director of the propaganda office of the NSDAP (Reichspropagandaamt) (Welch 1993: xv, 36).

In January 1934, Rosenberg was granted by Hitler the 'high-sounding, if insubstantial' (Cecil 1972: 113) role as chief ideologue of the NSDAP, the 'Führer's Commissioner for the control of the entire intellectual and ideological training of the party and all its affiliated bodies' (Der Beauftragte des Führers für die Überwachung der gesamten geistigen und weltanschaulichen Schulung und Erziehung der NS Bewegung). Rosenberg's claim to be the party ideologue rested on his 'The myth of the twentieth century' (*Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts*) which first appeared in 1930.

In ideological terms Rosenberg was closer to Himmler than to Hitler, with an interest in prehistory, Aryan heroes, Indian philosophy and a hostility to Judeo-Christian values (Cecil 1972: 119). Agreement in principle led to rivalry in practice (Padfield 1990: 202), and Rosenberg came to regard Himmler and his SS as the enemy. Göring by contrast had little time for Rosenberg and his Teutonic myths, and deplored Rosenberg's impact on the theatre (Reuth 1993: 192).

Rosenberg hankered after a more substantial role than that of Party ideologue, and sought a role in foreign policy. Dismayed by the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact of 1939, he subsequently found himself at odds with Hitler's ideological crusade against the Slavs. Rosenberg advocated a policy of conciliating those nationalities traditionally hostile to the Russian state, and the creation of administrative buffers against Great Russian Bolshevism. In spite of their disagreements, Hitler named Rosenberg minister of the newly created Reich Ministry of Eastern Occupied Territories (Reichsministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete) on 17 July 1941, a role which brought him into conflict with other players in the eastern theatre, including Himmler (Cecil 1972: 189–216).

Rosenberg dedicated a great deal of attention to the acquisition of libraries and archives, partly to stock his planned *Hohe Schulen* which were to be post-war centres for Nazi research and educational training. This academic looting was carried out by the so-called Rosenberg Bureau (Amt Rosenberg) (Bollmus 1970; Lemchenas 1994). In 1941 Rosenberg set up the Institute for Research into the Jewish Question (Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage) in Frankfurt am Main, which acquired the holdings of the Rothschild Library in Paris and other materials from the occupied West, before turning its attention to the East. There Rosenberg's organization (in the form of its operational unit, the Einsatzstab) appropriated the collection of the Jewish Scientific Institute in Vilnius (Daxelmüller 1994: 80–2).

Himmler's aspirations to influence in intellectual and cultural matters were realized in the Ahnenerbe (Research and Teaching Foundation, Ancestral Heritage). The society had originally been set up by Himmler at the prompting of the prehistorian Herman Wirth²⁰ in July 1935 (under the name Deutsches Ahnenerbe, Studiengesellschaft für Geistesgeschichte) and 'provided a pseudo-scholarly forum for the substantiation of Himmler's aberrant, ahistorical, holistic cultural-political vision, while satisfying the SD's more pragmatic desire to extend its control into the nation's intellectual life' (Burleigh and Wippermann 1991: 64). Wirth was also director of the Teaching and Research Post for Inscriptions and Symbols (Lehr- und Forschungsstätte für Schrift- und Sinnbildkunde) in Marburg. In 1936 the German Research Council (Deutsche Forschungsgesellschaft) created the Central Office for Symbol Research (Hauptstelle für Sinnbildforschung), which became part of the Ahnenerbe in 1937 under its director Karl Theodor Weigel as the Promotional Centre for the Study of Inscriptions and Symbols (Pflegestätte für Schrift- und Sinnbildkunde, Emmerich 1994: 49; Brednich 1994).²¹ The chief administrator of the Ahnenerbe was SS-Sturmbannführer Wolfram Sievers (condemned at Nuremberg and hanged in 1948).²² From 1940 the Ahnenerbe was termed Wissenschaftsamt A der SS (Simon and Broderick 1992: 239).²³

A publishing house was set up, the Ahnenerbe-Stiftung in Berlin in April 1938, directed by Friedhelm Kaiser from 1939. The Ahnenerbe acquired academic archives and took over various organizations such as the Association of German Biologists which became the Reichsbund für Biologie and the Haus Germanien in Hildesheim, which was acquired in January 1944. Publications of the Ahnenerbe included brochures with the title *Deutsches Ahnenerbe* (published from July 1935 to April 1938 by Koehler and Amelang of Leipzig), *Nordland* (started in 1935) and *Germanien*, published from March 1936 in collaboration with the *Vereinigung der Freunde germanischer Vorgeschichte*. *Germanien* appeared until July 1943. The Ahnenerbe also used its funds to support and control pre-existing journals, reflecting the general 'two-track' approach to the Nazification of the academia: the co-ordination of pre-existing institutions and the establishing of

new institutions, journals and administrative structures. In 1937 the academic head of the Ahnenerbe, Walther Wüst, joined the editorial board of the *Zeitschrift für Namenforschung* along with K. Ruppel and Joseph Schnetz and the journal became an official Ahnenerbe publication (previously the journal had been entitled *Zeitschrift für Ortsnamenforschung* under Schnetz' editorship).²⁴

Like its competitors in the field of culture, the Ahnenerbe scrambled to acquire libraries and archives seized within Germany and looted as the German army pushed eastwards. Himmler's assumption of the title of Reich Commissioner for Solidifying the German Folk-Nation (Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums) gave him a role in the East, and led to competition and then collaboration with Göring's Main Trust Office for the East (Haupttreuhandstelle Ost), which had the goal 'of taking over and tending to Polish private and state property already acquired by the military, civil, and other service branches, including Jewish property, as well as items still to be acquired, parcels of land, businesses, etc.' (quoted in Oesterle 1994: 225–6). Himmler persuaded Göring to accept Professor Heinrich Harmjanz (who had a post in the Ministry of Education as well as holding the rank of SS-Sturmbannführer) as General Trustee for the East (Generaltreuhandler Ost, Oesterle 1994: 226–7). Among his other offices, Harmjanz was head of the folklore section of the Ahnenerbe.²⁵

In considering the notion that rivalry between agencies of the state left room for limited academic freedom, one should take into account the schema laid out by Gerd Simon (1986a: 540). Simon, who has researched the linguists of the Third Reich in great archival depth, offers this following career trajectory, based on the case of the linguist Georg Schmidt-Rohr. In general the scholars in question were ideologically of a conservative–folkish cast, holding views sometimes indistinguishable from Nazi doctrine. After 1933 many came into conflict with some official agency (with a party agency, with the Dozentenbund, or most frequently with the Amt Rosenberg) over a small matter which was however important for their scholarship. Very few of the most important scholars 'turned' straight away; in general they went in search of a power centre which could give them backing, and which at least in the matter at hand seemed less dogmatic. In this way many of these scholars came into the orbit of Himmler and the SS, and made ideological concessions to Nazism, in many cases amounting to a 180 degree about-face. Some even got caught up in the planning and carrying out of crimes such as robbery, imprisonment in concentration camps, and medical experiments. Thus the ideological hard-line of the Rosenberg Bureau worked in successful harmony with its rival the Office of Ancestral Heritage, since – in classic protection-racket style – academics went to one to sort out problems with the other. What was chaos on one level operated functionally on another.

In the de-Nazification process, and in the writing of the history of Nazi scholarship, attacks by a particular scholar or organization have been adduced to show how an individual, far from

being a Nazi, was a victim of Nazism.²⁶ In many cases, however, these attacks reflect political or ideological conflict within Nazi scholarship. As an example, one can cite the down-grading of the committed Nazi activist Eugen Fehrle's status from politically 'tainted' (*belastet*) to 'accomplice' (*Mitläufer*) by the Court of Appeals in Karlsruhe in 1948, on the grounds that:

on the basis of Hitler's writings, he believed that the NSDAP would bring about a strengthening of the folk-nation, as the accused understood it in his scholarly work. He resisted accepting the office of adviser for university affairs and did so only to at least prevent a fanatical Nazi from being appointed to this position. He sharply countered the views of Alfred Rosenberg, and did so openly. In his teaching he not only excluded everything that could be viewed as NS propaganda, but also emphasized the absence of a scientific basis in National Socialist theses, especially in race questions.

(quoted and translated in Assion 1994: 129)

This judgement was subsequently overturned, after protests from the university, and in 1949 Fehrle was declared by the court to be an activist and an opportunist. But his final classification was as *minderbelastet* or 'less tainted' (Assion 1994: 130).

Karl Vossler

Vossler taught Italian at the University of Heidelberg, and was briefly at the University of Würzburg from 1910–11 before taking up the chair of Romance philology at the University of Munich. He was forced to retire early in 1937²⁷ and after the war was appointed rector by the American administration (1946) at the age of 73. Vossler has been characterized as a 'fervent German patriot, yet anything but a nationalist', dismayed by fascism in Italy and with strong pan-European intellectual roots (Albrecht 1994: 4953). Vossler is associated with 'idealism' in German linguistics and opposition to positivism (Vossler 1904). In this he was deeply influenced by Benedetto Croce,²⁸ recognized as the leading intellectual opponent of Italian fascism. Vossler was also one of a number of scholars who interceded on behalf of the Marburg Romance scholar Werner Krauss (1900–76) in 1943. Krauss had been sentenced to death for association with the Schulze-Boysen–Harnack resistance group, and was eventually pardoned on psychiatric grounds (Gumbrecht 1988: 292–3; Orozco 1995: 199–200).

Ernst Gamillscheg (1966: 341) paints a portrait of Vossler as unwilling to bend to the exigencies of the time, and standing out for intellectual freedom in Germany, just as he saw in Italian fascism a betrayal of the Italian destiny. For this he was punished by being forced into early retirement

beginning from 30 January 1937.²⁹ This sign of official disfavour notwithstanding, Vossler taught the 1937–8 winter semester (Maas 1992: 502), and in 1940 was nominated for president of the Deutsches Wissenschaftliches Institut in Madrid (Laitenberger 1976: 150, quoting document BA-R 51/2, DA, 281, p. 1). Other nominees for similar posts abroad were Hans Freyer for Budapest, and the Romance scholar Ernst Gamillscheg for Bucharest. A fulsome tribute to Vossler was published in the *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen* by Gerhard Rohlfs in 1942 (1942a).

As so often is the case, history's objective witness turns out to be a participant. When the Deutscher Neuphilologenverband (the German Modern Languages Association) had been politically co-ordinated in 1933 under its new Führer Kurt Schwedtke, Gamillscheg was appointed representative of the university professors on the new executive committee or Führerrat (Schmidt 1934). Gamillscheg also attended a conference of school teachers and philologists held on 27–31 October 1934 in Trier under the auspices of the National Socialist Teachers' Union (NSLB), speaking on 'Romania, Germania' (Zellmer 1934: 335).³⁰ The thrust of Gamillscheg's work was that the rise of Germanic civilization ('Germanic blood') had injected new life into declining Romance culture, arguing in effect that without the Germanic peoples there would have been no Romance peoples (Kramer 1988: 74–6).

Archival materials on Vossler include correspondence with the Reichsschriftumskammer concerning permission for Vossler to accept an award granted by a foreign government (Spain). A letter from the RSK dated 22 June 1944 confirms that Hitler has given permission for him to accept the award.³¹ There is also a letter making it clear that Vossler could not apply to join the RSK, since his activities as a academic writer did not fall within its purview. Vossler had applied for membership in 1942, but apparently had to fill out a similar form when he applied to accept the Spanish award. Thanking the president of the RSK (Loth), Vossler added: 'Proof of my pure Aryan descent and family ties has long since been supplied. The relevant papers can be found in my personnel files at the University of Munich' (letter dated 4 April 1944).³²

A letter from Reichsdozentenführer Walther Schultze dated 17 December 1942, to the Partei-Kanzlei in Munich concerning whether Vossler should be allowed to travel abroad to hold lectures gives the following account of Vossler's career and relationship to National Socialism. Vossler's case had been looked into in connection with the suggestion of the German Academy that Professor Vossler should be awarded the Humboldt-medal in honour of his 60th birthday. Schultze noted that there was no doubt that Vossler had been pro-Jewish before 1933; he had characterized anti-Semitism as harmful to culture and it had been alleged that he was for a time president of the League against anti-Semitism. On these grounds an objection had been made to his being honoured by the Academy.

As to whether Vossler should be allowed to travel abroad, Schultze noted that the local party Dozentenführung had agreed to Vossler's travelling abroad, in view of his high international standing as a scholar and the fact that he was now considered politically loyal. However Schultze took exception to this policy, arguing that it should be clearly seen that every German scholar who travels abroad not only represents his own academic discipline, but is primarily a representative of National Socialism. Schultze was of the opinion that Vossler, in view of his age and his past opposition was not capable of representing the National Socialist world view, his talents as a scholar notwithstanding.³³

Vossler came under attack in the 1970s for his political and ideological views; this was characteristic of the 'score-settling' polemics of that generation. Hausmann's commentary, that it is not the task of disciplinary history to issue moral verdicts, is characteristic for this one (Hausmann 1993: 6).

In criticism of Maas (1988a: 265), Simon (1990a: 83) warns against making a hero out of Vossler, making the general point that among those who stayed in the Reich, the line between perpetrator and victim is nearly impossible to draw. Maas in reply emphasizes that Vossler is almost alone in having taken a public stand against racism in the course of his career, and refers the reader to a study by Gumbrecht (1988). In that study, Gumbrecht describes Vossler as an aristocratic inner exile, a withdrawn figure, morally aloof, but also anxious to conserve his reputation and unwilling to 'dirty his hands for anyone' (1988: 278). He follows Vossler's career path and rise to eminence, quoting from a nationalistic attack on the omnipresence of the French language Vossler made in 1922, but also showing that Vossler was an explicit opponent of anti-Semitism. Gumbrecht argues that Vossler's career and reputation had reached their high point by the early 1930s, and that his 'withdrawal' from academic life was partly a symptom of this (1988: 290–1).³⁴

Julius Schwietering

Typical of the kinds of debates within *Volkskunde* is the exchange between Christa Kamanetsky (1977, 1980a, b) and Linda Dégh (1980a, b). The dispute was triggered after a discussion by Kamanetsky of folklore in the Third Reich, in which she criticized the writings of Julius Schwietering.³⁵ Kamanetsky distinguished between Schwietering's appeal for 'a new community life of the German nation' through appreciation of the folktales, and the more radical Karl von Spiess, who 'objected strongly to the notion that folk tales were universal in spirit, and that in their motifs and structure one could trace some cross cultural patterns shared by many nations'. What was required was 'an emphasis on those elements that made the German folktale *unique*

among all others' (Kamanetsky 1977: 170–1). Kamanetsky also includes Friedrich Panzer in this radical category, since he concluded that the German folktale was 'a tale of specific Nordic Germanic origin, dating back to the Bronze Age, or possibly even to the Stone Age' (Kamanetsky 1977: 172). Picking up on this criticism of Schwietering, Dégh (1980a: 324) describes him as 'the founder of a historically–sociologically oriented trend in folkloristics', that he had brought the study of the folktale beyond the 'text-oriented, past-focused diffusion studies and comparative–philological analyses', introducing the techniques of 'community study' and 'participant observation'. Schwietering's approach was 'far ahead of that of the folklore establishment of his time' (1980a: 327).

The implication seems to be that Schwietering, as a modernizer and a progressive within the discipline, must be free of the stigma of Nazism: 'Looking back from the distance of forty-five years one could raise objections to his identification of the "natural small group", the "folk group" with that of the village dwelling peasant's. One could also question his complete disregard of individual raconteurs and their creativity in storytelling. Nevertheless, these deficiencies cannot detract from the merits of the scholar who raised his voice in the interests of turning folklore into a historically–sociologically oriented anthropological discipline' (1980a: 327).

The progress of the discipline is defined from the present, and this notion of progress is then read back onto the question of whether Schwietering should be criticized. Nazism is equated with academic reaction.³⁶ Kamanetsky replies that 'Schwietering's most serious shortcoming was his use of an ambiguous terminology that provided an echo of the Nazi ideology' (1980a: 329). Schwietering rejected an earlier view of the community as groups of individuals:

Today, however, folklorists would have to realize that the community created folklore, and that folklore created 'the will to form the community'. Folklore demanded nothing less than 'the total dedication of the individual to the will of the community' (*das völlige Hingebensein an den Gemeinschaftswillen*). Whether Schwietering realized it at the time or not, words such as these recalled all too obviously the speeches of Himmler, Rosenberg or Goebbels, who constantly urged the German people to dedicate themselves *totally* to the will of the National Socialist folk community. [...] Schwietering further seemed to support the Nazis' obsession with the mystical bonds of 'blood and soil' when he referred to the German peasant groups as 'naturally grown groups' or 'organic groups', whose life within the 'totality of the *Volk*' was religiously oriented and determined by the peasant's relationship to the soil.

Kamanetsky also links Schwietering to Joseph Nadler's regional folklore of the German tribal

groups or sub-ethnicities. Invoking Orwell's essay 'Politics and the English language', Kamanetsky concludes as follows:

If thought may corrupt language, [...] then language is capable of corrupting thought! Even though Schwietering neither openly embraced racism nor the National Socialist Party membership, he was guilty of catering to the vague and ambiguous terminology of the Nazi ideology, thus making folklore vulnerable to ideological and political manipulation.

(1980a: 330)

Dégh criticizes this charge as 'vague' (1980b: 331), and reasserts that Schwietering was committed to a *Volkssociologie*. This term is more fairly to be translated as 'folk sociology' rather than 'folkish sociology', and disputes Kamanetsky's reading of the quotation 'das völlige Hingeeben an den Gemeinschaftswillen', seeing in as a description of a state of affairs rather than a demand or ideal.

Into this textual debate one can interpose another dimension, namely a fragment from the archival record.³⁷ In a letter dated 5 September 1942 from Professor Franz Koch³⁸ of the *Germanistisches Seminar*, University of Berlin, to a Herr von Werder³⁹ responding to a request for information about two recent appointees to chairs in Berlin, the writer complains about the Slavist Professor Max Vasmer and Schwietering, referring in particular to Schwietering's role in the filling of the chair for linguistics. At stake were two chairs: one to fill the vacancy left by the death of Julius Petersen (1878–1941), the other to fill a newly created chair of German linguistics.⁴⁰ Koch claimed the credit for creating the latter chair during his time as Dean; the discipline of German linguistics having been neglected by the university, it was now hoped that a new chair would put this situation right. However Petersen's successor Professor Hans Pyritz⁴¹ had been granted his *Habilitation* under Koch only two years earlier; the other chair went to 'ein Dozent Kordes [Cordes] aus Hamburg'. Koch complained that it seems from the outside as if he has appointed second-rate or novice scholars to make it look like he is trying to surround himself with unthreatening mediocrity, but in fact the university did not follow his advice. Koch goes on to put the blame on Schwietering.⁴²

In the end it all goes back to Mr Schwietering. To take the chair in linguistics first, we have always had [Theodor] Frings in Leipzig uppermost in our minds; without question he is the man who has produced the most fruitful new ideas within German linguistics. Instead Herr Schwietering put forward the name of the completely unknown Mr Kordes,⁴³ a beginner, whose only achievement up to now has been contested by

specialists such as [Erich] Gierach. This really is a case of wishing to avoid having an important person in the vicinity, and to have a small man instead, one who would have to be grateful and who would feel dependent, in other words the oldest style in the newest edition. Nothing would have come of all this had not the Dean, Professor [Hermann] Grapow,⁴⁴ an Egyptologist, who has no idea of the requirements of *Germanistik*, a party member, come down on the side of Schwietering, that is to say on the side of the decidedly reactionary. Schwietering had set up a clique with [Max] Vasmer,⁴⁵ who had never made a secret of his rejection of National Socialism and who when I suggest something as a matter of principle always does the opposite, even if this leads to complete nonsense, and [Eduard] Schwyzer, as 68 year old Swiss and yesterday's man. The Dean is making common cause with these blatantly reactionary people and the rector, Hoppe,⁴⁶ also a party member, gave his blessing. Furthermore the Dean is no leading light in his discipline – I shan't waste any words on the former rector Hoppe – he was only made Dean at that time because of his membership of the party, but then in decisive matters such as these he leaps to the support of the other side!

Things were no different in the case of Pyritz, only there the whole matter was even crasser, given that it was a question of absolutely my very own area, later literary history, and I was the one who had a right to be heard and to give a specialist judgment. Once again Schwietering got together with the same people, none of whom have any idea about this area: Vasmer is as a Slavist a pure philologist, and as everyone knows is only familiar with the linguistic side of his discipline, Schwyzer is in actual fact in the first instance an Indo-Europeanist, and once again the Dean gave his support to their side, an emphatically uncomradely way of behaving, which I can only explain as being due to personal animosity. (Grapow commands absolutely no respect in the faculty; under my Deanship this was not the case and such circumstances can easily give rise to psychological ructions that lead to these kinds of unprofessional results.) You can well imagine how this has aggravated me and that I am considering the possibility of leaving Berlin.

I have always treated my colleague Schwietering with the greatest imaginable open-mindedness, but have increasingly come to see that he likes to play the role of conspirator, that he is working against me, though this worries me less, since I know how to defend myself if necessary. Of greater moment is the fact that, as I have come to realize, Schwietering is completely at cross-purposes, and that the tendency of his literary history is becoming stronger and stronger in his recent small publications – he produces little and at a slow rate. In the recent anthology of writings by German specialists of

Germanistik “Von deutscher Art in Sprache und Dichtung”,⁴⁷ he managed to go off at a complete tangent in his contribution on Wolfram’s *Parzifal* (volume 2) and to quote Jews such as [Georg] Misch⁴⁸ and [Max] Scheler. His presentations lack real thought and insight, at least that is my opinion.

I believe that this should be enough for you. If you need any further information, I will gladly discuss the matter with you verbally. There will always be people like Schw. and we cannot and should not eradicate [*totmachen*] them. This would only create a cheap martyr’s crown for them. The trouble is that such people manage to achieve an amazing amount of personal–political influence, i.e. the real blame lies with the leadership of the faculty. Things are in particularly bad shape here in Berlin right now, since, as you probably know, we don’t have a leader of the professors’ union, with whom we would be able to work in a professional [*sachlich*] way; one more reason to give up Berlin.

The micro-world of university politics is embedded in and overlaps with the politics of the NSDAP. While this case might superficially look like the Party versus Schwietering and Vasmer, we should also note that of the names mentioned here the Dean, the Rector, Grapow, Cordes, Pyritz⁴⁹ and almost certainly others are also Party members. Koch is upset that the other party members have not supported him, they have behaved in an uncomradely way. But he also presents himself as a champion of academic standards, as someone who knows the direction in which the faculty should be moving, and one who is against the formation of reactionary academic cliques which obstruct academic progress.

Schwietering and (more explicitly) Vasmer are presented here as an opponents of National Socialism. However this characterization can be understood in many ways. At one extreme we can interpret this label as applying within the particular micro-setting evoked above and described from Koch’s point of view. In that setting Schwietering is portrayed as an enemy by someone who identifies himself and his personal ambitions, beliefs and micro-political schemings with National Socialism. Alternatively the term ‘opponent of National Socialism’ might describe someone who is fully and globally committed to a struggle against National Socialist ideology and policies.

Vasmer, for example, was one of five German academics who signed a letter of protest against the *Sonderaktion Krakau*, issued in 1939 against the staff of the Jagiellonian University (Burleigh 1988: 253–4). Dr Berger of (Rosenberg’s) *Die Hohe Schule in Vorbereitung*, his interest aroused by a lecture delivered by Vasmer on the history of Eastern Europe, wrote on 3 February 1943 to Dr Wolfgang Erxleben of the *Hauptamt Wissenschaft im Amt Rosenberg* asking for a political assessment of Vasmer. In a reply dated 8 February Erxleben described Vasmer as one of Germany’s

most prominent Slavists who had led Germany's delegation to the 1934 International Conference of Slavists in Warsaw. He continued:

Politically speaking he belongs to the liberal–reactionary minded older generation of professors. He was born and grew up in St Petersburg, finished school and university in Russia, achieved his *Habilitation* there and continued as a professor under the Bolshevik regime. He then went to Estonia as a professor in Dorpat, and then in 1921 the Marxist Minister Fleiss brought him to Leipzig; subsequently minister C.H. Becker obtained a post for him in Berlin. In his works he has on occasion thanked the social-democrat minister Grimme for financial support, but also the German-nationalist chief secretary [Ministerialdirektor] Valentiner. On account of his scholarly expertise he is envisaged as a possible future subject director in the Reich Centre for Research in the East [Reichszentrale für Ostforschung].

The foundation of this Reichszentrale was announced by Rosenberg in 1943, and was to consist of 'a committee of representatives of the NSDAP and state, an administrative office, 38 study groups, and some 400 academic institutes in the occupied East'. Rosenberg's aim was to achieve financial and political control over scholarship on Eastern Europe, and the Reichszentrale was to be housed in Rosenberg's ministry (Burleigh 1988: 298–9). Rosenberg was Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories (Reichsminister für die besetzten Ostgebiete).

Hennig Brinkmann – scholar–spy

The Germanist Hennig Brinkmann was not merely a committed scholar in the National Socialist state, he was also an activist willing to put himself at the service of the German intelligence services.⁵⁰ He assumed an information gathering role during leave granted from the University of Frankfurt from October 1943 to early 1945, first in Istanbul and then in Croatia. One aspect of this that came to play a crucial role in academic life as the war progressed was the possibility of being drafted into the armed forces. The politics of achieving an *uk-Stellung* (i.e. of being classified as indispensable – *unabkömmlich* – in one's civilian job) gave additional leverage to agencies with an interest in university politics, particularly as more and more institutes of higher learning were being threatened with closure as the military situation worsened.⁵¹ In a letter of 20 May 1943 to Dr Herbert Scuria of the Ministry of Education Brinkmann reported that his call up for military service had been withdrawn.⁵² When Brinkmann was unable to return to Istanbul in late July 1944, the question of his *uk-Stellung* arose again. In September 1944 he was drawn into service in

the defensive preparations in the West (in Trier), but a process set in motion to send him to Croatia allowed him to be released from war service to take up the chair in Zagreb (Agram). He eventually arrived there on 16 November 1944.

Brinkmann's appointment in Istanbul had encountered opposition within the Faculty at a meeting in March, and as Brinkmann found out when he visited Istanbul in late April 1943, that opposition emanated from Professors Peters and Auerbach.⁵³ In a report for Scuria dated 29 April, Brinkmann explained that Auerbach, as head of the language school, had been entrusted by the Dean with the task of finding a Germanist. 'The emigrant Jew [Erich] Auerbach' had looked for candidates from Switzerland, but without success. Peters and Auerbach had objected that German professors would only come as propagandists. According to Brinkmann, this led Turkish members of the Faculty to object that it was peculiar that they of all people were taking a racial point of view of the matter ('dass ausgerechnet sie den Rassestandpunkt vertraten'), and that it was unacceptable for foreign guests to play politics in this way. Auerbach, as the successor to Leo Spitzer, had responsibility for German language classes; one of Brinkmann's key task was to wrest control of the teaching of German from 'the Jew Auerbach's control'.⁵⁴ Brinkmann also reported that the Dean was keen that the Germans become more active in cultural politics, given the success that the British had been having in this area. Brinkmann was anxious about books, complaining that the library of about 160 books had a substantial amount of 'Jewish literature'; he was also full of plans not only for a Deutsches Seminar, but that this would serve to cover a much wider role in cultural politics, so that the seminar would play the same role as the German Institutes (Deutsche Wissenschaftliche Institute, roughly the German equivalent of the British Council) in other foreign countries. However directly propagandistic activities would be avoided, and Germany would be represented by its cultural achievements. This suggestion was picked up by Scuria in a letter to the Foreign Ministry, in which he reported that the Party Central Office had determined that Brinkmann was in political terms particularly suited for this task in Istanbul.⁵⁵

Once in post, Brinkmann took control of the teaching of German as planned, but was unable in the short term to dispense with the language teachers, undesirable though they were for various reasons (one was Jewish, one had been stripped of his German citizenship, and one was married to a Jewish woman and had been stripped of his citizenship). However Brinkmann confirmed that he was determined to get rid of them ('Ihre Verdrängung muss angestrebt werden').⁵⁶

Much of the file is taken up with complaints about money and the need for foreign currency, and with Brinkmann's family circumstances. But a clear sense emerges of someone anxious to show willing, and to give political and diplomatic meaning to his academic position. Brinkmann attempted to use his post at the university to promote good relations between Germany and Turkey, suggesting for example that scientific equipment be donated to the university as a gesture

of good will to the rector.⁵⁷ He also sought to influence appointments at the university (in the file there is discussion of chairs in Slavic studies and Sinology), primarily with the aim of preventing British professors from getting positions. In turn, Scurla presented Brinkmann's role as an important one in the cultural struggle being waged against British influence in Turkey.

Back in a bombed-out Frankfurt University for the summer session, Brinkmann complained to Scurla that books sent from Germany to Istanbul had been lost in transit, and that he 'was coming from an institute which as yet has no books to an institute which no longer has any books'.⁵⁸ On a more positive note, Brinkmann recounted his progress in establishing German studies to the Foreign Ministry in a report sent from Frankfurt. Brinkmann noted that happily a plan to have German literary works translated into Turkish as part of a project for the translation of European classics made no room for any works by Jewish authors, with the single exception of a piece by Heine. Brinkmann had also put forward the Bonn professor Deeters for a chair in Indo-European linguistics, so as to prevent any moves in his absence to appoint a British linguist.⁵⁹

It is evident from the file that Brinkmann was not merely an enthusiastic cultural activist anxious to serve his government abroad. He was also responsible for gathering intelligence about his colleagues at the University of Istanbul, a strange mix of emigré Jews, allied nationals, Germans, neutrals and Turks.⁶⁰ In letters to Brinkmann dated 27 May and 5 June 1944, Scurla noted that a report Brinkmann had promised on all the personnel in the Philosophische Fakultät (Faculty of Arts) had not arrived; Brinkmann replied on 6 June that he had sent it through channels (i.e. via the Embassy in Ankara to the Foreign Ministry).⁶¹ In the letter of 5 June, Scurla laid out Brinkmann's timetable for his upcoming visit to Berlin: this would involve meetings on 15 July with – among others – Franz Six of the Foreign Ministry,⁶² with the intelligence services (the *Sicherheitshauptamt*) and with the Overseas Department of the NSDAP.

By late July 1944 rapidly worsening diplomatic relations between Germany and Turkey had put Brinkmann's return in doubt;⁶³ in addition, the Turkish authorities had lodged an objection against Brinkmann, alleging that he was in contact with the Turan movement.⁶⁴ Brinkmann strenuously denied the charge, and put pressure on Scurla to have the Foreign Ministry clear up the matter. In any case, relief from his war duties came in the form of the chair in Zagreb, Croatia. In a letter dated 27 October to Scurla, Brinkmann laid out his plans for 'kulturpolitische Arbeit' in Zagreb, and noted that he needed to speak to Dr Köhler in the Foreign Ministry and the Croatia expert of the intelligence services, the Reichssicherheitshauptamt, before his departure.

Brinkmann arrived in Zagreb on 16 November 1944. On 15 December he held his inaugural lecture, and laid out ambitious plans for cultural activity in a report to the Foreign Ministry dated 22 January. In the schools students should not study German texts simply as a means for

language learning, rather the texts should be seen as ‘the expression and the embodiment of a spiritual world’. Only in this way could German literature have any ‘cultural–political impact’.⁶⁵

Brinkmann’s inaugural lecture in Zagreb had as its theme the notion of trust (*Vertrauen*).⁶⁶ In contrast to French culture, German literature had overcome alienation and the isolation of the individual by finding trust on three levels: through friendship (Klopstock), love (Romanticism) and comradeship (First World War and after).

Adolf Bach

A further glimpse into the academic politics of National Socialism is afforded by the case of Adolf Bach, the folklorist and dialectologist.⁶⁷ Bach had studied in Kiel, Giessen, Berlin, Paris and Oxford, but the decisive influence on him was that of the Giessen professor Otto Behaghel. After a period as a schoolteacher, he was appointed to the Bonn teacher training college (Hochschule für Lehrerbildung) in 1927 as Leo Weisgerber’s successor. At the same time he taught *Germanistik* at the University of Bonn, and took over the Department for Folklore and Dialect Studies (Abteilung für Volkskunde und Mundartforschung) from Theodor Frings.⁶⁸ However Bach did not achieve the rank of Ordinarius until after his appointment to the University of Strassburg in 1941.

An evaluation of Bach’s career published on his 80th birthday⁶⁹ portrayed him as having distanced himself from the ‘unscientific’ folklore of the National Socialist period and as having come under attack for this. It also portrayed Bach as a modernizer, as rejecting the traditional folklorist’s emphasis on collecting information about customs, beliefs and objects. *Volkskunde* should not be *Volksgüterkunde* but *Volksmenschenkunde*, an approach that brought him closer to sociology and social psychology.

To set against this we have the criticisms by Emmerich (1968: 19–21) of Bach’s retrospective account of the Nazi period and the following judgement from Gerndt (1994: 6–7). We should not, he argues, necessarily take at face value ‘moderate scholarship’, given that it often hides ‘a battle for power and personal gain’. Nor should we regard National Socialism as simply the product of individual weaknesses; we should not accept the image of disciplinary history that we have been offered in the post-war years:

Still missing is an exact analysis of the astounding (can we say?) ‘naiveté’ of Herbert Freudenthal and Adolf Bach. In their basic studies of *Volkskunde* published in 1955 and 1960,⁷⁰ neither really perceives the political, specifically the National Socialistically tainted, implications of various disciplinary concepts. They do not mention them, nor,

for that matter, do they draw conclusions for their own projected work, even though both authors had been sufficiently ‘satiated by experience’ in reference to their theme.

Bach looks like a candidate for ‘non-core’ status, one of the scholars whose works do not reflect the hard-line Nazi view of the world, indeed are at some remove from it. Such scholars have often been implicated if not in the historical phenomenon itself, then in the extraordinary delay in critically evaluating it, in the ‘business as usual’ attitude which they took to their disciplines after 1945.

But this non-core/core distinction is misleading, since there was no single, unified core Nazi ideology: however there were plenty of academics and administrators who believed themselves to be its representatives, and whose real enemies were others who also claimed this right for themselves.

The core/non-core distinction relates to the other key dichotomy, that between scientific and non-scientific (or ‘pseudo-scientific’). The implicit equation we are offered is that core Nazi equals ‘non-scientific’, non-core equals ‘scientific’ (though with perhaps a moral taint by association). This preserves disciplinary history intact, for it relegates Nazism to the non-scientific realm, to that of the methodologically aberrant. It cannot be the case that – from our contemporary muddled vantage point – in looking at National Socialist scholarship the distinction between science and pseudo-science becomes magically clear. Young (1995: 27–8) writes:

Commentators talk of ‘pseudo-scientific’ racial theory in the nineteenth century, as if the term ‘pseudo’ is enough to dismiss it with ease: but what that term in fact implies is that racial theory was never simply scientific or biologicistic, just as its categories were never wholly essentializing. Today it is common to claim that in such matters we have moved from biologism and scientism to the safety of culturalism, that we have created distance and surety by the very act of the critique of essentialism and the demonstration of its impossibility: but that shift has not been so absolute, for the racial was always cultural, the essential never unequivocal. The interval that we assert between ourselves and the past may be much less than we assume.

It might be objected that the ‘Aryan physics’ of Philipp Lenard and Johannes Stark was clearly both Nazi and non-scientific, whereas Werner Heisenberg’s absolute commitment to scientific standards was neither core Nazi nor unscientific. However if Heisenberg had (however reluctantly) built the Bomb and won the war for Hitler, no one would have been inclined to quibble about whether his research was Nazi science or not. Heisenberg was committed to the

maintenance of scientific standards for an entity he conceived of as *German* science, and as a consequence made the decision to stay in Germany to maintain those standards. His aim was to safeguard the place of *German* physics in the international discipline.⁷¹

Further food for thought can be found in another fragment consisting of letters evaluating Bach in relation to the chair at Strassburg University.⁷² Bach's confirmation in this post was opposed by the folklorists of the Amt Rosenberg who were organized under a Reich Working Community for German Folklore (Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft für deutsche Volkskunde). The core of this group was Karl Haiding, Karl Heinz Henschke, Erich Kulke, Karl Ruprecht, Thilo (Theodor) Scheller, Hans Strobel, Ernst Otto Thiele and Matthes Ziegler.⁷³ With the departure of Ziegler from the Rosenberg Bureau in 1941, Strobel became its leading folklorist.⁷⁴

A letter dated 7 January 1942 from the Party (NSDAP Partei-Kanzlei) in Munich to the Amt Rosenberg in Berlin raised the issue of the Bonn chair in folklore, noting that Adolf Bach had been provisionally assigned to teach folklore at the University of Strassburg for the winter semester 1941–2, with the intention that he should eventually fill the chair there. This matter was referred by Dr Erxleben to Dr Hans Strobel (letter dated 14 January 1942) of the Amt Volkskunde und Fei ergestaltung. The Partei-Kanzlei sent a reminder to the Rosenberg Bureau dated 26 February 1942. A further letter from Erxleben to Strobel dated 13 March 1942 asked that the matter of Bach's appointment be dealt with as quickly as possible.

The next letter in the file is from Dr Karl Ruprecht⁷⁵ of the Amt Volkskunde und Fei ergestaltung to Erxleben responding to a request dated 13 March 1942. This gives an extensive evaluation of Bach. Ruprecht notes that Bach is known for his introductions to German dialectology and to German folklore (1934, 1937), but that there are problems with his dialectological work. Bach is a close follower of Hans Naumann's 'liberal two-layer theory', one which juxtaposes the collective, undifferentiated folk masses, whose mental life is dominated by primitive associative thought processes, with the strongly logical individualism of the cultural elite.⁷⁶ Bach's work on folklore, a few timid gestures in respect of the importance of race⁷⁷ and a racially oriented folklore notwithstanding, is dominated by Naumann's ideas. It is evident, continues Ruprecht, that this framework leads Bach to errors and to conclusions which are politically unacceptable and incompatible with the National Socialist world view: 'The whole area of folk ethics [*Volks gesittung*], of the inherited Germanic–German folk culture is seen viewed within the framework of the old school of ethnology [*Völker kunde*] and so presented in an unacceptable way' (p. 2). Quoting from Bach, Ruprecht shows how Bach emphasizes that similarities in folk beliefs and customs between the Germans and other peoples are the result not of influence and borrowing but of independent development. Within the particular, the cultural, there is a core supernational folk culture which transcends time and race. This common human core finds its best expression in folk

belief, folk custom, and ethics and folktales. There we can discern common human tropes such as belief in Mana, the soul, demons and magic, i.e. in what we term 'primitive religion'. Key concepts are 'protection against demons' (*Dämonenabwehr*), animism, taboo, Mana, orenda etc. This liberal folklore also had neighbourly relations with religiously oriented folklore studies in the post-war period. These involved looking at the relation between the church and folk culture.

Thus we can see, concludes Ruprecht, that there is a general lack in Bach's work of attention to moral values and of a firm grounding in folkish-racial thinking essential to the study of folklore. For Ruprecht, this is the source of all the weakness and false conclusions found in Bach's work, objections which Ruprecht had against the Naumann-school in general.

A further evaluation of Bach was produced by Dr Gustav Borger of the NSD-Dozentenbund office in Munich and sent to the Partei-Kanzlei, with a copy to Heinrich Härtle of the Rosenberg Bureau (letter dated 23 March 1942). Noting that Bach was productive and thorough in his scholarship, he reiterated worries about Bach's commitment to 'liberal scholarship' which is particular evident in his *Deutsche Mundartforschung* and breaks through occasionally in his *Deutsche Volkskunde*. However Borger notes that there are signs of an attempt to align ideologically with National Socialism in the first-named of these books.⁷⁸ Bach is also presented as a quarrelsome individual, involved in repeated conflicts with doctoral candidates. However Borger noted in Bach's favour that his position at Bonn was not well-defined and that it had been already suggested that an independent position would bring about a change in Bach's attitude. Indeed the Strassburg professors' union had reported that Bach was devoting himself with energy and enthusiasm to his position in Strassburg, and that he was a disciplined and reliable colleague.⁷⁹ The political evaluations of Bach are contradictory:

Bach has been a Party Member since 1933, a member of the SA-Reserve since 1934, is a member of the Kyffhäuserbund⁸⁰ and the National Socialist Professors' Union. However in the earlier evaluations there is reference to his inactivity with respect to political matters, and to a political position which in terms of world view draws on his ties to Catholicism. These ties are also said to be evident in his book on folklore. The authorities in the Strassburg Professors' Union say with regard to politics that he has shown himself to be also useful in this regard. They point to the fact that he has signed on an assistant whose scholarly, personal and political commitment to National Socialism is unequivocal.

Borger concludes by saying that his office has no objection to Bach's confirmation in Strassburg,

given that he has acquitted himself well thus far and that this appointment seems to offer the possibility of a change in his overall attitudes and behaviour.

A letter dated 23 March from Erxleben also to Bechtold at the Partei-Kanzlei maintained the objection to Bach's confirmation in Strassburg, quoting Ruprecht's report. However Erxleben subsequently suggested to Strobel that the matter be reconsidered and that Bach's performance in Strassburg be evaluated before reaching a final decision. While he may have performed well in setting up the Strassburg Institute for Folklore (Strassburger Institut für Volkskunde), we should wait and see whether his political attitude remains positive in the future. Erxleben said that he was not yet ready to withdraw the objections of the Rosenberg Bureau.

It seems that the Ministry of Education was supportive of Bach's candidature. A letter from the Partei-Kanzlei to the Rosenberg Bureau dated 7 May 1942 raised the matter again, noting that the Ministry of Education had put forward Bach's name in a letter of 17 March 1943. The letter (by Borger?) noted that the Strassburg Professors' Union had with reservations approved the appointment, since Bach's performance had thus far been good. The expectation was that the post in Strassburg would lead to an overall improvement in Bach's attitude. Erxleben explained in reply (20 May 1942) to Bechtold of the Partei-Kanzlei that the Rosenberg Bureau had sent a copy of the Bureau's evaluation to the Professors' Union in Strassburg once they had become aware of their position on Bach. The Rosenberg Bureau was still not ready to withdraw its objections but wished to monitor further Bach's progress in Strassburg.

The matter dragged on into 1943. In a letter dated 19 June 1943 to the Partei-Kanzlei, an official (Hoffman) of the Ministry of Education stated that the procedure was once again, being put in motion for the confirmation of Bach as Ordinarius in Strassburg, arguing that Bach had performed excellently in his post and that there was nothing that would be held against him in terms of character or world view. The Rector of Strassburg University had reported (letter dated 28 May 1943) that all those who had been appointed with Bach, many of whom were considerably younger than him, had now been confirmed. Bach was understandably pained and aggrieved by the situation, reported the Rector, and the Dean of the Philosophical Faculty joined with him in asking that this intolerable situation be resolved as soon as possible. This led to a letter (dated 29 June 1943) from the Partei-Kanzlei to the Rosenberg Bureau (attention: [Heinrich] Härtle) reminding them of the situation. Erxleben referred the matter back to Strobel (13 July 1943). Strobel's reply (dated 16 July 1943) was a grudging withdrawal of the objection. Strobel reported that he had had a long discussion with Bach several months previously and determined that Bach was 'much too harmless' to be considered an ideological opponent. While he was still critical of Bach academically, he felt that Bach had accepted during the interview that he would take account of 'our' point of view, and that in the course of time there might be a chance of co-operation. There was however

no prospect of Bach being presented as a representative of National Socialist folklore; nor, for all his industry and mastery of detail, was Bach destined to be one of the greats of folklore. Strobel concluded by reiterating that he was dropping his objection to Bach, though he could not go so far as to give him a recommendation.

The existence of the Rosenberg Bureau thus gave Strobel the opportunity to pull rank over Bach, to play the academic bully with at least part of the official apparatus of the National Socialist state behind him. This does not make Bach a victim of National Socialism: he was after all a Party member himself, as are all the main players in the Strassburg micro-drama.

In the foreword to the second edition of his *Deutsche Mundartforschung*, (1950), Bach records that Ferdinand Wrede (1863–1934) had recommended Bach as his successor in the post of director of the German Linguistic Atlas (*Sprachatlas des Deutschen Reiches*) in Marburg, and that the Ministry of Education had supported him. However ‘the events of 1933 soon put another complexion on matters’. Bach later concluded that the work of National Socialist folklorists should not be rejected in its entirety. However for all the effort and resources and both good and misguided intentions National Socialist folklore had gone astray ideologically.⁸¹ This parallels quite closely what Strobel had said about Bach. Different historical contexts give different scholars the authority to determine what is the core and what is the periphery of scholarly activity; we should however treat these frequently glib assessments with scepticism.

In the letter discussed above, Ruprecht had seemed to imply that Bach’s discussion of race was an attempt to ingratiate himself with National Socialism. In fact, discussion of the issue of race remained a feature of Bach’s work after 1945. Bach argued in the second edition of his *Deutsche Volkskunde* that the misuse of race theory under National Socialism should not lead us to reject all discussion of this matter within a scholarly race science. This work includes a detailed discussion of the relationships between the human body (including skull-shape), territory, temperament and racial categories (1960: 145–221).

A few examples will suffice to illustrate once again how complex the determination must be of what is ‘core’ Nazi and what is not:

Each race (we are therefore staying with this notion) is originally bound to a particular living space, to particular living conditions.

(1960: 148)

In the Nordic race can be discerned a cool matter-of-factness accompanied by an active temperament. It is characterized by initiative and belligerence, self-confidence and leadership qualities, as well as self-restraint. The Nordic person is reckoned to be optimistic, but also quarrelsome, open,

committed to truth and honour. His powerful and decisive will is combined with a talent for organization (1960: 160).

Within Germany the Nordic race appears at its strongest and purest in the north-west.
(1960: 164).

Bach did however make some amendments to his intellectual vocabulary, editing out the word *Muttersprache* from the 1961 edition of his history of the German language. However the term made a come-back in the 1978 edition, though with the recognition that it had been abused ‘unscientifically’ in the National Socialist period (Ahlzweig 1994: 209–11). As Ahlzweig points out, this editing out shows the ‘tainted’ nature of the concept in Bach’s eyes; and its return reveals Weisgerber’s influence over the linguistics of the Federal Republic of Germany in the 1970s.

Academics in the totalitarian state

What emerges from the political assessments are the contradictory impulses of the ‘one party state’. For often those who are within the party are in political opposition to their fellow party members and represent opposing cliques, whereas the outsiders, the quasi-neutrals, are both necessary to the identity of the party members, but also the ‘raw material’ of political intrigue, the *sine qua non* of the entire apparatus of evaluation and assessment. These ‘neutrals’ are also a sign that academic standards exist independently of party considerations; they also represent a resource that can be drawn on and used for certain political ends, and material that can be considered for ‘Nazification’.

Within any national academic system there is to be found a complex set of institutional relationships, personal loyalties, methodological affiliations, interacting with career and even commercial considerations. The relevant state-supported ideology may play a significant role in laying down editorial policy, varying from a requirement of absolute conformity on pain of death to an awareness of general political and ideological constraints which must be observed. Decisions about academic appointments, promotions, editorial matters clearly arise in a particular academic climate made up of these and other factors, many of which are not explicit or must be reconstructed or inferred. The simple question: ‘how much freedom was there for academics to debate ideas in National Socialist Germany?’ has no simple answer, in part because we must define freedom – initially at least – from the point of view of the participants. There certainly was freedom in some spheres not to participate. Römer (1985: 178) records that the Germanists Friedrich Beissner, Max Kommerell and Walther Rehm were able to withdraw from participation in the show-piece

collection of National Socialist *Germanistik*, *Von deutscher Art in Sprache und Dichtung* (Fricke *et al.* 1941).

What were the ideals of the German professoriat? Abendroth gives the following summing up of the political culture of the largely homogenous Weimar professoriat:

They opposed the Weimar constitution and its democratic norms even though they did not refer to this as a political opposition as such but still held onto the ideology that they were ‘unpolitical’ and thus ‘scholarly objective’ and were only committed to ‘German culture’. They perpetuated themselves for the most part through the *Habilitation* of young scholars who brought with them from their backgrounds and their studies similar biases or who admitted quite openly that they were ‘conservative–revolutionary’. They rejected every attempt to analyze this preregulation of their thinking by sociopolitical, socioscientific, and psychological means, and viewed it as an apparent attack on the principle of scholarly objectivity. They thus closed off for themselves all paths for escaping this self-limitation of their scholarly and political accomplishments or even to come to terms with democracy. (Abendroth 1984: 21–2, quoted and translated in Lixfeld 1994: 12)

This view of the professors of Weimar Germany seems to assume a latent desire to escape ‘self-limitation’.

Burleigh, in his account of *Ostforschung* in the Third Reich, has no time for talk of resistance:

No one asked these scholars to put their knowledge at the service of the government: they did so willingly and enthusiastically. There was virtually no ‘resistance’, and what has been described as such turns out, on closer inspection, to have been the result of political miscalculation, a naïve unawareness of the priority of ideology over scholarly exactitude or, more simply, a matter of being outmanoeuvred by more practised political operators.⁸²

(1988: 9)

A devastating account of his former colleagues was given by the theologian Karl Barth, who was dismissed from Bonn University and left Germany in 1935. The text is drawn from an open letter to Erich von Holst published in the *Göttinger Universitätszeitung* in 1947. The latter had taken exception to Barth’s contention that the majority of the older generation of German professors were not fit to teach in a university:

Shall I give the names, recount episodes, describe scenes that I was amazed to witness? Shall I write of the manner in which I heard the assassination of Rathenau discussed at a large party given for professors at Göttingen? Or of the visit of Hindenburg to Göttingen? Or of the wrangling between the senate at Münster and the government in Berlin over the three outsize portraits of the Kaiser the university wanted to keep? Or of how Air Force Captain Hermann Göring was received within the sacred precincts of the university and was permitted to deliver an inflammatory oration lasting two hours on the occasion of the Langemark celebration? Or of the memorable quarrel about the war-memorial in Bonn? Or . . . do not doubt I could mention much more, some plain, some coloured. [. . .] Then you saw what happened in 1933. You saw all the academic glory of these professors, and their professional ethical code to boot, collapse like a house of cards before the onrush of unmistakable evil. You saw how, with a few honourable exceptions, they all changed their colours; they readjusted themselves and began to pipe loudly or softly, as the case might be, their modulation of the latest tune. [. . .] These are the reasons which prompted me to my statement that I consider the majority of the older generation of German professors unsuitable for the education of free men, such as the future of Germany needs.

(Pascal 1947: 142–3)

ETYMOLOGY AS COLLECTIVE THERAPY: JOST TRIER'S LEAP OF FAITH

Introduction

Jost Trier's¹ reputation outside Germany is based on his role in the development of European structural semantics. Trier features in survey works on the history of linguistics and in textbooks on semantics in the guise of the founder of word-field theory and, with Weisgerber, as the chief inter-war exponent of structural linguistics in Germany. His study of the structure of the Middle High German vocabulary *Der deutsche Wortschatz im Sinnbezirk des Verstandes* (1931a) has become a minor classic in modern European linguistic thought. However, with the exception of two largely retrospective articles published in 1968 and 1972, Trier's 'structuralist' writings appeared between 1931 and 1938 (the latter the publication of a paper delivered in 1936), and the bulk of his publications pursued an interest in etymological semantics which show remarkable continuity in themes and methodology from the mid-1930s to the end of his career. In simple terms, Trier moved from word-field theory with its notion of the vocabulary as a synchronic structure, to the panchronic study of word-relations in German. It would however be oversimple to conclude that Trier found structuralism to be incompatible with Nazism; Trier was never committed to an ahistorical or abstract semantic formalism. More accurately, one might say that the tension between a synchronic, structural semantics and a sense of the importance of historical continuity and panchronic relationships was ultimately resolved in favour of the latter.

In their preface to Trier's 1964 *Festschrift*, Foerste and Borck argued that the move Trier made to Münster from Marburg in 1932, and the contrast that he found there to his native Hessen, heightened Trier's awareness of the regional diversity of German vernacular culture (in particular in styles of farmhouse construction) and led him to link his interest in language with folklore and *Heimatkunde*. From this *realia*-based form of linguistic history (*Wort und*

Sachengeschichte), he went on to evoke ‘the place of the fence [*Zaun*] in the thinking of early times, to *Hegung*, play, dance and rhythm’ (1964: vii).²

However, alongside this biographical explanation, runs the logic of Trier’s intellectual development. To understand the evolution of Trier’s thought, we need to look more closely at Trier the structuralist. What was the nature of his commitment to structural analysis and how did he conceive the goals of linguistics? For the change was not only methodological; it brought with it an evocation of Germanic culture that at points became ecstatic. In a series of articles published during the war, Trier used the etymology of certain key terms to characterize the conceptual world of early Germanic society. These were near prose poems where the formal and semantic relations between the key concepts is both the subject of investigation and of celebration. Etymological relations such as that between *Pflug* (‘plough’) and *pflügen*, (‘to care for, look after, do something habitually’) point to conceptual relations and become the key to the reconstruction of the fundamentals of national being (Trier 1945).

Trier elaborated a series of concepts grounded in the Germanic concept of the *Ding* or *Thing*, the Germanic assembly of the warrior class which fused the military, the religious, the festive (dance), the political and the social. The Nazi era saw a half-hearted attempt to revive this cultural form by constructing places of assembly, the so-called ‘Thing-movement’. There were plans to build hundreds of these *Thing-Stätten*, but only a small number were completed (Reichel 1993: 210–11). By 1936 a degree of disillusionment had set in, and the movement was no longer officially promoted. However, Trier’s writings sought the *Ding* in the word-associations of the German language, and provided a method for its revitalization. The boundary between the community and the outside which was symbolized in the ring of warriors in the *Ding* was there in the language and the boundary it represented between the foreign on the outside and the internally cohesive community within. The aim of the *Thing*, that of creating *Volk* out of the masses (Schrade 1936: 125), was also that of Trier’s linguistics. Trier ultimately aimed to mark out the boundaries of the *Volk* on all levels of reality through the reanimation of layers of meaning to be found in the German language.

From structuralist to fascist?

Word-field theory and related trends within German linguistics that have been termed ‘Neo-Humboldtian’ constituted a reaction to the perceived atomism and individualism of Neogrammarian linguistics, but they can also be seen in the context of the general critique of lexicographic semantics implicit in the works of Michel Bréal and Ferdinand de Saussure. Holist or structuralist

ideas in linguistics were also part of wider trends in European thought; in Germany one could mention Ernst Cassirer's 'neo-Kantianism', the philosopher of language Anton Marty,³ and gestalt psychology, associated with Max Wertheimer, Kurt Koffka and Wolfgang Köhler.⁴ Linguists such as Weisgerber and Trier also drew on the traditional concerns of the conservative. German educator, and their anxieties about the health of the national culture, language standards, pedagogy, youth morality, and the inculcation of 'correct thinking'. The ideology of the *Wandervogel* youth movement was, for example, a formative influence on the linguist Georg Schmidt-Rohr (Simon 1986a).

The basic assumption behind Trier's word-field theory was that the vocabulary of a language at a given point is a structured whole made up of sub-systems or word-fields. These word-fields are compared to mosaics, the word-field is a set of linguistic forms that expresses the underlying conceptual structure (1931a: 1). The structure of the word-field structures the inchoate world of thought (1931a: 2); it orders our conceptual life, rather than reflecting an already existing set of clearly demarcated concepts. In this, a language does not reflect what Trier calls 'true being' (*reales Sein*): 'it creates intellectual symbols, and Being itself, that is Being that is apprehended by us, is not independent of the manner and articulation of the symbolic structure of language'. The two are not completely parallel, i.e. the Being given by language is not identical to the Being of the referents of language.

In *Der deutsche Wortschatz im Sinnbezirk des Verstandes* (1931a), Trier adopted a broadly structuralist position on the relation of origin to function. He affirmed (1931a: 12) that we cannot draw any conclusions about the nature of a phenomenon from its historical origin. The study of the wordfield takes the linguist closer to the psychological reality of the language-user, since the latter must view the linguistic system as a historical *fait accompli* (1931a: 10): 'the history of meanings and designations does not exist for the language-user who rarely will pause to reflect on the cognate relations between words'. No longer sure of the exact genealogy of his thinking, in particular of whether Ipsen's '12 short lines' (1924) influenced him, Trier gave the laurels to Saussure and named Weisgerber as a kindred spirit, making in a footnote a generous genuflection to Saussure's influence. Porzig's notion of field is dismissed as being 'not on our path' (1931a: 11n).

Rejecting the conventional notion of semantic history as a history of the changes in the meanings attached to a particular form, Trier posed the rhetorical question of whether, instead of asking 'What do words mean?' he is to ask 'What are things called?'⁵ Though some sense can be made, in spite of the difficulties, of the notion of a history of the terms for plough or sickle or for parts of the body, this is inconceivable in the case of abstract nouns such as *Klugheit* ('cleverness'). There is the word and nothing else; though that is not to say of course that the concept can be

grasped once and for all through its etymology (1931a: 16). The nature and function of a particular item is to be investigated by characterizing its role within the system to which it now belongs. Etymology cannot be a reliable guide to meaning (1931a: 17). We cannot get much useful information about the concept *Gemüse* ('vegetable') from its etymology, only from its relation to the terms from which it is distinguished, *Fleisch* ('meat'), *Kartoffeln* ('potatoes'), etc. There is however a history of the designation of the word-field taken as a whole which parallels the history of the designation of a word with a concrete *designatum* such as 'sickle'. So while the individual abstract words do not have a designation, the field that these word make up does have a continuity of designation over time. Trier denied therefore that this form of analysis involves a denigration of history (1931a: 13); history must become the comparison between static states (*komparative Statik*). Trier put this in the context of Saussure's warning against the mixing of the synchronic and the diachronic points of view. However, Trier saw himself as going a step further than Saussure, to advocate a comparative history of synchronic states that would involve 'jumping from one cross-section to another to describe the structural history of a [linguistic] field'. In this no violence would be done to the new ordering of Being represented by each horizontal state.

Trier diverged from the *Cours* most clearly in his concern to elucidate the world view (*Weltanschauung*) encapsulated by a particular language (1931a: 20–2). Humboldt, though on the right lines, had failed to grasp that the inner linguistic form of a language changes over time. In tracing the history of the conceptual structure of a language, we trace the history of *Geist*; the direction of inference is from linguistic history to the history of *Geist* and not vice versa (1931a: 22). Thus, for Trier, changes that took place in the structure of the word-field of understanding and knowledge in Middle High German between 1200 and 1300 reflected changes in social structure and in the intellectual world view of the society.

Trier raised briefly the question of the relationships between fields themselves (1931a: 25). Just as we cannot trace the history of an individual word through its history seen in isolation, since its very nature is dependent on its relation with neighbouring terms, so the field is presumably defined by its place in the mosaic of word-fields. In other words, there is a regress of explanation which makes it difficult to see how the word-field can be individuated and its history documented. Trier denied that the lack of any systematic treatment of the relation between fields vitiates the analysis. He did however concede that the analysis has in consequence a heuristic quality. The problem was however presented as practical rather than theoretical. Trier later returned to this issue (1934a: 188). Noting that all levels of language are articulated structures ('in der Sprache ist alles Gliederung'), he admitted that the boundary between fields must be drawn somewhat arbitrarily. Again he stressed that the observed discrepancies between different time-periods belong to the matter under investigation; they do not pose a theoretical problem.

We can, however, find in this discussion the seeds of doubt about the viability of the synchronic–diachronic distinction. Trier drew attention to the possibility that his methodology might imply the impossibility of history. The Saussurean notion that linguistic change is blind and, to put it bluntly, pointless, was foreign to Trier’s way of thinking, deeply bound up as it was with the teleology provided by the evolution of *Geist*. For, on the strict Saussurean model, any notion of historical continuity must be extremely weak, being perhaps based on a rough parallelism between units (*Glieder*) in successive systems. But even the assertion of this weak form of continuity involves the structuralist linguist in blatant self-contradiction. What a comparative history of static states at best might offer is a history of differences, rather than a history of continuity. As Ullmann suggests (1977: 250), one of the advantages that can be claimed for word-field theory is that it transcends the minutiae of individual word-histories to describe ‘the transformation of an entire system’. Trier came to see the evocation of the panchronic unity of the German vocabulary as his primary task as a linguist. Adherence to the strict Saussurean distinction between synchronic and diachronic was incompatible with that goal.

One of the consequences of Saussure’s distinction between synchrony and diachrony is that, logically, French in the year 1600 and French in 1900 are not the same language, in the sense that there is nothing systematic to be said about the relation between the two synchronic systems. Saussure described the speaker of a language as being unaware of the succession of linguistic facts in time, as being confronted with a state (*‘devant un état’*, [1922] 1983: 117), that is, as being unaware of the history and evolution of the system. Linguistic reality is, as it were, immanent to consciousness and consciousness is conceived of as a succession of states in a perpetual present. In Harris’ (1981: 51) formulation, the *Cours* ‘rightly insists that the linguist cannot enter into the consciousness of the language-user except by suppressing history’. It is evident that the suppression of history involves also the suppression of culture, if culture is defined as evolving tradition and continuity of belief and behaviour. The form of cultural amnesia that this implies would clearly have been anathema to Trier; yet it is not only implied in Saussure’s *Cours*, but also lurks as an anxiety in Trier’s own account of the German intellectual vocabulary. Synchronic linguistics asserted the uniqueness of each linguistic system’s world view at any given point in time, but at the cost of denying any such world view or overall coherence to the language conceived of as a historical entity. Taken to its extreme, such a doctrine could be seen as purchasing an ideal static unity in each successive present at the price of the panchronic autonomy of the language and attendant culture. The structuralist point of view not only creates an object, *langue*, it also dissolves the object, the panchronic language ‘German’.

The xenophobia that is such a marked feature of Trier’s war-time writings was also to be

found in his ‘structuralist’ phase. Trier’s remarks on the origins of the word-field of intellectual terms in German ([1931b] 1973: 67) suggest a strong urge to delimit the autochthonous from the foreign. This field, suggested Trier, had not developed autonomously within the German world as it had in the Greek world, but had come to Germany in waves from outside. Even if the ‘bodies’ of the words were not foreign, their ‘souls’ were. The shock from these continual waves of influence was responsible for the strangely fractured and disparate picture that presents itself to the observer. Trier thus drew a boundary between the ‘Germanic’ and the foreign, using the rhetoric of cultural rootedness. The key term is *Bodenständigkeit*, with its linking of territorial and cultural continuity.

Speaking of the modern German concept of *Klugheit* (‘cleverness’, ‘intelligence’), Trier ([1932a] 1973: 82) observed that there was no way for the German of 1200 to express an equivalent concept. The evolution of the field of intellectual terms was presented primarily in terms of a lost unity: ‘*Wise* embraces the person in their totality and as a totality’ ([1932a] 1973: 84). Trier drew a portrait of the ethically and intellectually mature elevated individual who would have the quality of *wise*, comparing it to the Greek notion of *sophos* ([1932a] 1973: 85), and contrasted on the one hand Greek antiquity and mediaeval Germany in 1200 (where the notions of *Ethos* and *Logos* are closely intertwined) with the late mediaeval period and the modern world.

It is possible to read this vision of the courtly individual simply as the description or evocation of a certain ideal. But in evoking it in such lyrical terms and in describing it as a form of cultural wholeness absent in the modern world, Trier came close to a presentation of the history of German culture as the disintegration of a courtly mediaeval total world vision. In the modern world, intellectual faculties have been sundered from moral ones. It has become possible to conceive of the intellect independently of both social structure and a particular moral, aesthetic or religious code ([1932a] 1973: 87), what Trier had termed the ‘divorce of intellectual endeavour from wisdom’ ([1931b] 1973: 76). The villain of the piece was late mediaeval nominalism ([1932a] 1973: 90). Its essence is division, separation, the attainment of self-sufficiency. That which was merged, is parted; that which was overlapping, is set side-by-side; that which was part of a whole becomes autonomous ([1932a] 1973: 90). One begins to assign to the so-called different realms of existence, what we term today their particular rights: ‘the state is discovered as an autonomous domain, one is on the way to the recognition of economic life as an area with its own life and own constitutive rules’. The division of labour, the recognition of the state as an autonomous entity with power over individuals, these are the consequences of the nominalist breach in the courtly totality. In the closing paragraph, Trier suggested that we might have something to learn from this pre-nominalist world in the midst of the uncertainties of our *Klugheit*-dominated existences. Trier

evoked the breach in the concept of *wisheit* and the divorce of the intellect (and therefore *Wissenschaft*) from the moral and the aesthetic.

Trier gave credit to Saussure for having shown the way back to the Humboldtian notion of articulated structure (*Gliederung*). But what remains is the question of linguistic change. This, Trier argued, could not simply be left out of the picture. Saussure's division of linguistics into two disciplines, the synchronic and the diachronic, was a 'violent solution' which, in spite of its merits, threatened the unity of the object of study ([1934a] 1973: 134). The nature of these distinctions was of importance for Trier's discussion of the difference between the study of 'meaning' and that of 'content' (*Bedeutungsforschung* as against *Inhaltsforschung*). Trier argued ([1934b] 1973: 175–6) that the former was atomistic: it linked an individuated form to an individuated content. In the nineteenth century language was viewed as a historically evolving phenomenon, and the study of meaning was primarily concerned with semantic change (*Bedeutungswandel*). Consequent upon this was an atomistic, psychological view of linguistic evolution.

Trier envisaged two possible solutions to the dilemma posed by the structuralist dichotomy: the approach of von Wartburg (1931) and that of himself and Weisgerber (Trier [1934a] 1973: 114ff.). Von Wartburg's approach to the question of linguistic change was presented not as incorrect or misguided, but as limited in application. Wartburg described the change from *cattus* ('cat') and *gallus* ('rooster') in Southern French dialects to *gat* and *bigey*. A sound change had threatened to make the two terms homonymous by phonological merger, and to avoid the loss of the distinction, one of the stylistic variants for 'rooster' was borrowed to restore the balance in the system (the example is from Gilliéron, see Ullmann 1977: 185–6). Trier did not deny the cogency of this explanation and saw in it a convincing refutation of Saussure's division of the science of linguistics, as the reality of language could not be separated into being and becoming in the way that Saussure wished; the study of vocabulary must reconcile the historical and the descriptive perspectives. Trier glossed the change described by Wartburg as one in word content (*Wortinhalt*) rather than language content (*Sprachinhalt*), since it does not involve a change in the world view of the language. For Trier the merger of the terms for cat and rooster would be dysfunctional: 'a cat is a cat and a rooster is a rooster' ([1934a] 1973: 117). The language adjusts and the anomalous state is superseded or avoided by a state of affairs that accords better with how things are.

These remarks are revealing, for they show that Trier differentiated between the semantics of abstract terms and the semantics of referential terms. There are things and animals given prior to classification and any language-state that did not recognize them would be dysfunctional. This is

shown by the self-correction that the system performs when phonological change threatens to erase a crucial distinction. The implication is that language does not totally dominate world view: if that were the case, the merger of the terms for cat and rooster would simply lead to the merger of the signifieds.

Saussure's *Cours* did indeed imply that changes on the formal level could lead to changes on the conceptual level, giving the example of the merging of the French reflexes of Latin *decrepitus* and *crispus*: 'when two words merge through phonetic change [. . .], the ideas tend to merge as well, however dissimilar they may be'. Similarly, when one word gives rise to two forms (e.g. Latin *cathedra* and French *chaire* and *chaise*) 'inevitably the phonetic difference which has occurred will tend to acquire significance' ([1922] 1983: 167). The case discussed by Wartburg does seem to offer an interesting challenge to the Saussurean model, but to the anti-nomenclaturism of the *Cours* rather than to the synchronic–diachronic distinction. For Wartburg's example is a perfect illustration of the ability of the synchronic to make order out of changes happening over time. The problem for Saussure would be that one could not point to the need for the distinction between 'rooster' and 'cat' without invoking the notion that a language is a nomenclature.

But Wartburg, should he wish to see this example as the paradigm form of historical explanation, was for Trier too much under the sway of Saussure's *Cours* and the mechanism of Gilliéron ([1934a] 1973: 118). For the impulse to sound change comes in this case from the outside, in the form of a sound change, and thus the diachronic, the vertical axis, is perceived to be removed from the operations of *Geist*. This suggested that linguistic change was ahistorical (*geschichtslos*) and without rationale (*ohne Sinn*). This kind of change could happen anywhere at any time, given that for many items in the vocabulary of a language there are stylistic variants that could be brought in to salvage the system: there is nothing particularly revealing about the fact that such a change has taken place.

Trier was a critic of the mechanistic view of language change, not on the grounds that its explanations were empty, but because the kind of change with which it deals was theoretically uninteresting and uninformative. The case discussed by von Wartburg does not, by definition, tell us anything about the specific period and language under consideration, for it is merely a particular instance of a general law and could happen at any time given the correct configuration of circumstances. Trier in effect argued that Neogrammarian linguistics (generally labelled 'historical') was not historical in any significant sense. If we can identify a panhistorical law or type of change that occurs in different periods of time, then that law is *de facto* historically uninteresting, since it cannot illuminate the specifics of any particular time-period. The observation of the effect of this law is not a historical observation at all, any more than the observation of a particular instance

of the working of the law of gravity would be. Trier was thus concerned to move mechanistic explanations from the centre to the periphery of linguistics, and he opposed the kinds of mechanistic psychological theories that would be adduced to support such explanations, i.e. that postulate a universal psychological make-up. Significant change is historical and is not blind: it belongs to the realm of *Geist* (and hence its study is part of a *Wissenschaft vom Geiste*). The *Cours*, from this perspective, emerges as simply an extreme form of Neogrammarianism: change is blind, not teleological.

What then was Trier's own conception of linguistic research? Trier argued that genuinely historical research is concerned not with the evolution of the meanings of individual words, nor even of their individual conceptual contents, but with changes in the structure of the language as a system or series of sub-systems. Changes such as these partake of the nature of *Geist*, in which the drive to new forms of social and moral order is expressed ([1934a] 1973: 123). Trier argued for some notion of collective and culturally meaningful change (*sinnvoll* as against *sinnfremd*). For Trier, significant linguistic changes were reflected in changes in the world view that a language embodies. But where does change come from? Does it come from 'outside'? If so, how can we say that these are the 'inner decisions of the language community'? If from the inside, then the seeds of change must already be present in the hypothetical original state. Recognition of this problem can be found in Trier's discussion of specialized languages (*Fachsprachen*) associated with particular groups or branches of inquiry. Trier argued that they have an important role in initiating changes in the wider system. He observed that specialized languages and group languages arise from the impulse to break through the boundaries of the language at particular points and escape from the received language-state. However one cannot escape from the language, rather one restructures it in the process of attempting what one perceives to be an escape from it. The consequence of this is that linguistics is the science of *Geist* par excellence, for the linguist must consider the special terminologies of, for example, law and theology. Criticism that this is academic poaching ('peeking over the fence into the neighbour's garden') is rejected by Trier on the grounds that linguistics must indeed leave its self-sufficient isolation to assume its place as the conceptual gatekeeper of all the disciplines ([1934a] 1973: 124n), a notion that Trier shared with Weisgerber.

Denying that the linguist could attain any certain knowledge of a domain of pure contents that transcends language, Trier nonetheless posed the question of the relation of various structured world views represented by different languages to the ultimate and true being, wondering whether we can speak of languages reaching more or less correct pictures of reality and whether we can argue that one language gives a better picture than another ([1934a] 1973: 125). Trier concluded that this is a question of transcendence, one that would make sense only as a theological question about the *Geist* of God and therefore unanswerable in an empirical science.

For Trier, one can pass from one language to another, but language is inescapable. There is no question of stepping outside the different possible world views offered by various languages. He continues as follows:

Changes in linguistic content – and by that is meant the truly historical processes in language history – must ultimately be understood as the result of the will of the collectivity to get closer to the truth, as a struggle for order. The ‘discovery’ of intelligence (*Klugkeit*) or talent (*Begabung*) are examples of steps that derive from the will to perceive true human nature.

([1934a] 1973: 126)

Taken out of context, this statement would imply a convergence between linguistic world view and the truth, and thus would suggest a progression towards self-recognition and self-knowledge in human societies. The ‘scare quotes’ around the word discovery are revealing of the dilemma Trier is facing. In the sentences following this quotation, he states that we cannot know whether individual steps take us closer to the ultimate truth or not, since we would have to be in possession of certain truth already, something the human condition does not permit.

Trier then turned to the question of how the linguist should respond to changes currently taking place in the language. He had argued that a linguist could have no privileged access to the best direction of change, and that linguistic change was a fundamental social phenomenon. The linguist must use the insight offered by conscience (*Gewissen*), ‘that is conscience understood not in the weakened, purely traditional sense or aesthetic sense language conscience, but in the full sense of the term’. This linguistic intuition must be combined with moral sensibility; it is not a matter for the purely linguistic intuition, which may be based on the aesthetic or tradition-minded prejudices of the linguist. Trier made the further point that the ultimate objective of research into conceptual content (*Sprachinhalt*) must be the study of the contemporary language, the linguist’s mother-tongue. But the speaker of a language – even the scholar – was too close to it and tended to see it as an unquestioned and stable reflection of the world. Thus the linguist needed to leave the study of the native language and study a different period or a foreign language, using this as a basis from which to return to a consideration of the mother-tongue. Comparison is therefore the key to self-knowledge.

In Trier ([1938a] 1973: 181) the mixed verdict on Saussure was reiterated, but with the synchronic–diachronic distinction characterized as a ‘desperate solution’. This paper repeated in condensed form the position adopted in 1934 and summarized the basic conclusions of Trier’s

work on the word-field of knowledge. The paper opened with a language compared to a house, with parts of great durability, such as words like *fünf* ('five') and *Vater* ('father'), and others which undergo replacement without great structural changes such as words for 'big' and 'small', 'left' and 'right'. Then there are structurally significant great changes which reflect or cause (the potential ambiguity was not discussed by Trier) changes in the self-perception and self-understanding of the speakers of the language.

In a 1968 retrospective on word-field theory, Trier downgraded Saussure's importance in the development of word-field theory, stressing that it had tried to meet a practical need of historical semantics ([1968] 1973: 191). According to Trier, this need arose because for some areas of the vocabulary there are no stable concepts that remain constant over time. In this he draws on material discussed in Trier (1938a). The task of word-field theory was then to deal with cases where there seemed to be no non-linguistic reality against which to measure linguistic change. Traditional referential semantics could not deal with these. The change from MHG *zese* and *winster* to NHG *rechts* und *links* ('right' and 'left') could be dealt with by what he terms 'historical onomasiology'; terms such as *Liebe* ('love'), *Tugend* ('virtue') and *Bildung* ('education', 'self-development') were quite another matter ([1968] 1973: 191–2). Thus the development from *zese* to *rechts* can be seen as a simple replacement, whereas this is not the case with abstract terms where new paths of thought have arisen and a change in linguistic content has taken place. Trier denied that the rise of word-field theory had any connection with general linguistic or linguistico-philosophical problems ([1968] 1973: 192). Whether Trier is a reliable guide to his own intellectual evolution is open to question. The emphasis in 1968 on practical problem-solving in linguistic description contrasts oddly with theoretical, philosophical and ultimately mystical tone of much of Trier's work in the 1930s and 1940s. Trier himself had seemed to embrace theory ([1934a]: 1973: 111): 'We cannot avoid dealing with theory.'

Trier continued his retrospective on the origins of the concept of the semantic field by crediting Guthrie Ipsen (1924) with providing the term *Feld*. Ipsen's model was, however, too static ([1968] 1973: 193). Trier used the image of a running horse to express 'the forward motion of an articulated whole through time and at the same time the continual shifting relations holding within this whole'. The original aim had been to grasp both the successivity and the simultaneity of the phenomenon in motion, but, noting Goethe's remark that such an attempt could lead to a kind of insanity, he had sought refuge in the comparison between different states at different times. Foerste and Borck suggest that Trier developed in his etymological works 'a homologous point of view that does not view the object (of study) in isolation, but as part of a (structured) whole' (1964: vii). This 'whole' is conceived of in much broader terms than the word-field of the

structural semanticist, for it involves not only the typical context of utterance (the recognition that, as Foerste and Borck phrase it, ‘the original word content is determined through its embeddedness in a particular work situation’), but also the socio-cultural context. Thus the structuralist notion of words as parts of wider interdefining systems is extended to include the world view of the whole culture in paradigm contexts.

For Trier, a language represents a world view that has a meaning beyond merely serving in the communication of ideas; for Saussure, at least on the most common reading of the *Cours*, the nature of the world view that a language gives its speakers is an accident of history. This is no minor matter of theoretical interest, but a fundamental difference. For if your world view ‘matters’, it cannot be irrelevant where it came from, why it has changed, and where it is going.

The linguist in the vanguard of the mother-tongue

Between the publications on word-field theory that made Trier’s reputation and the etymological works of the 1940s there is something of a hiatus. Trier published nothing in the years 1935, 1936 and 1937 (Ader 1964), and then a series of articles on German folklore and house-styles (e.g. 1938b). The paper discussed above that Trier published in 1938 (Trier 1938a) had been presented at the International Congress of Linguists in Copenhagen in 1936, and this paper effectively marks the end of Trier’s active engagement with word-field theory (1938a). In 1938 Trier held a public lecture at the University of Münster entitled ‘Why do we study the history of our mother-tongue?’ This lecture fused Trier’s interest in the structure of houses, his research into the word-field of intellectual terms in Middle High German, and his concern that the linguist should play a socially relevant role in guiding the development of the language. In this, Trier gives special emphasis to the linguist as the member of a folk community of Germans with a common mother-tongue, and to that mother-tongue as embodying the accumulated wisdom of the German people (Trier 1939).⁶

This lecture concerned the role of the linguist and his special responsibility towards the mother-tongue. For Trier, there should be no question of reconciling the quest for knowledge and understanding (*Wissenschaft*) and ‘life’. When we come to consider the relationship between scholarship and the folk community (*Volksgemeinschaft*) we can see that even the most rarefied forms of scholarship are not entirely independent of particular national mentalities. Not every comrade of the *Volk* (*Volksgenosse*) can expect to participate directly in scholarship; that idea reflects an individualistic way of thinking. The whole is more than the sum of the individual parts, and the scholars are in the service of the people, and play their role in the great competitive

struggle between the world's civilized nations (*Kulturvölker*). The scholar is in the service of a superordinate cultural–spiritual entity (1939: 4). The linguist who studies the mother-tongue has been granted a special duty by the folk community, viewed in this context as a community of language.

Surely, though, to ask just about the history of the mother-tongue is to narrow the question? But this is true only if one thinks of history as being the past, and believes that history ceases in the present. In the present we are within history, and just as the study of lineage and genealogy (*Ahnenforschung*) is only meaningful for someone who wishes their family line to continue into the future, so the study of the history of one's own mother-tongue only makes sense if the language has a future. There is therefore a special duty and responsibility involved in studying the history of one's own mother-tongue, that is to say when a *German* studies the history of the German language (1939: 5). That responsibility is quite different from our responsibilities towards the study of other languages, which is not to say that we should neglect our scholarly duty in that regard either.

The responsibility that we have in relation to our mother-tongue is the duty to intervene, to evaluate and select. In this we should return to the seventeenth and eighteenth century view of language, and reject the notion that triumphed at the end of the nineteenth century that languages were almost akin to plants. While the insight that speakers change language was never lost, the speakers were also viewed as subject to these plant-like natural constraints. On this view, the linguist was above the language, having no right to intervene in its development (1939: 5–6). This led to the situation where the linguist as scholar was required to separate himself as completely as possible from his role as speaker of the common mother-tongue (*Sprachgenosse*). This unfortunate situation was particularly difficult if the linguist was required professionally to be involved in language education, given the professionally sanctioned view that all change should be tolerated as the potential inception of linguistic innovation (1939: 6).

But, argues Trier, language is not the result of plant-like development; it is the product of the cultural–spiritual labours of generations, a 'great power' that is resistant to the arbitrary interference of individuals. Nonetheless there is the possibility of intervention in cases of true spiritual emergency. Responsibility for the language looms over each generation of speakers; each has the responsibility not only to preserve the linguistic–conceptual structures it inherits in all their nuances, but also to develop them further. Future generations will pass judgement on how we have reconstructed the 'house of our mother-tongue' (1939: 7).

Trier picks up the image of the mother-tongue as 'a house in which we live', pointing out that there are part of the house which are of great durability (words like *zehn*, *Ich*, *Vater*), other

elements show astonishing changes (the words for ‘big’ and ‘small’ for example), though when the change is complete the structure has not necessarily altered. Some changes are, however, of more profound moment for the development of *Geist*. Here Trier returns to the topic of the terms for the intellect in Middle High German (Trier 1931a), and the point that it was not possible in Middle High German to speak of intelligence as separate from questions of morality, aesthetics, social status and religion. There was a unity to these concepts which has been lost in modern German, when we can ask if someone is ‘clever’ (*gescheit*) without invoking these wider moral and social concerns. This development went in tandem with the rise of late medieval nominalism.

For the linguist the question is: how is the ‘house structure’ different today from previous structures? And what new ways of thinking have arisen, and which have been lost? The linguist studies the history of our mother-tongue in order to act as a guide and advisor, pointing out the creative responsibilities of *Geist* in relation to language. This should not be a matter in which cold reason should dominate. In this endeavour the linguist should ally himself with the poet and with the poetic (*Dichtung*), so that they can go forward as companions.

Trier’s account of the development of the vocabulary of German seems to suggest that a previous holistic (‘courtly’) vision of human virtues has been lost. This would suggest a critique of modern German, and would suggest that the intellect has been alienated from the moral and the aesthetic by late medieval nominalism. For nominalism, one can also read here the atomism and perceived anti-holism of the Neogrammarians. But Trier does not go so far as to deny the validity of that change, though it is implied that the role of the linguist is to fuse the academic study of linguistics with the morality and aesthetics of language. Trier was however aware of the intellectual problems with evaluating language change as improvement or decline; in turning towards etymology he was conscious of making a leap of faith and an act of social leadership. In that leap the past could not only be reconstructed as in conventional historical linguistics, but re-created, re-experienced and re-lived. *Wissenschaft* and *Leben* would be reunited beyond the confines of time.

A society of strict discipline

Discussing Trier’s drift away from word-field theory, Malkiel (1974: 274) talked of his ‘hankering after the investigation of the concrete sector via frozen metaphors’ and a consequent ‘tacit escape into the enchanted garden of imagerially based etymology’. Malkiel cited Trier’s work from the 1950s and 1960s, passing over the war-period in silence. Yet Trier’s post-war etymological studies evince strong continuity with his war-time writings (see Trier 1951, 1952, 1957, 1963, 1964, 1965). Malkiel did, however, offer criticism of Weisgerber on ideological grounds. In

contrast to Trier's 'powerful gripping style' and 'moodiness, impudence, and verbal pyrotechnics', Weisgerber's rhetoric was criticized as 'ritualistic' and as having 'an ominous link with the all too familiar sloganeering of Kulturpolitik' (1974: 274, 275n).

In fact, Trier's etymological essays were filled with the Nazi vocabulary of xenophobia, race superiority, comradeship, collective duty, *Führertum* and totalitarian order. These essays began to appear in 1940 (see Trier 1940, 1941). What had been ambiguously implied in the word-field studies, became explicit. Modern society – for which we can read Weimar Germany – has separated the political from the poetic, the cultic from the agricultural, work from play, duty from dance, rhythm from work, the martial from the religious, the individual from the collective, law from community, etc. Trier followed Grimm's vision of the concrete or physical origin of all abstractions. That view had been developed by Meringer into a school using an 'ergological method' (*ergologische Methode*), in which linguistic reconstruction involved identifying the specific social organization or task in which a term had originated (Simon 1985b: 114). These micro-contexts are then projected onto the wider canvas of the development of the nation, and the formation of its borders as the boundary between civilization and wilderness (Simon 1985b: 114–5).

In 'Zaun und Mannring' (1942a), Trier considered whether the transition from the Germanic notion of *Mannring* ('the ring of warriors') or *Ding* (the Germanic Council) to the concept of *Volk* was an isolated one in the vocabulary or whether this important shift was shared by other terms as well. He observed that 'in many words connected with notions of *Volk* the appearance of the distinguishing warrior ring, the parliament as a form, is still to be discerned' (1942a: 236). The seeds of the notion of *Volk* are to be found in the *Mannring*. In the *Mannring* the group of men who have stepped into a circle felt themselves to be, and called themselves, a fence. They found the awareness of their own collectivity, for where else could such a consciousness be found, but 'in the distinguishing/separation of its cultic, arbitrating, decision-making, armed assembly?' (1942a: 236). In the *Mannring* the collective or the community (*Gemeinschaft*) comes into possession of itself: 'it (the community) experiences itself as separate and distinct; it is its separate and distinct assembly' (ibid.). The vocabulary associated with this assembly (*Ding*) and with the ring of warriors is related to terms for fence (*Zaun*) and ritual division (*Hegung*).

History cannot be seen as a sequence of static states, nor as a continuity of states. Its coherence is of a more radical kind, one that comes close to abolishing history itself. In its own moment of self-recognition the *Mannring*, the 'seed of development of the Volk' ('Keimzelle der Volkswerdung'), reaches a consciousness of itself as different, as distinct from, others. The idea of *Volk*, Trier pointed out, brought with it a double sense, *Völker* as 'others' and *Volk* as 'us'

(1942a: 240). This moment of self-recognition, of the fact, to put it crudely, that ‘we’ are not like ‘them’ establishes the preconditions for the existence of the *Volk* and defines what the *Volk* will be. There is no sense that the world of the *Mannring* is left behind; it is the seed of the nation, and it endures with the growth of the nation. There is one mythico-historical moment of self-recognition and self-definition; but the consciousness thereby created transcends historical evolution.

The *Mannring* is the foundation of the name of the Germanic *Völkerfamilie*, but it is also the origin of the cultural expressions unique to the *Volk*. The ‘ritually dividing warrior rings’ (*hegende Ringe*) emerge

as the seeds of the life of the collective muse, as the original space of dance, of poetry, of music, of drama. This view of the profound interwovenness of the political and the artistic on the basis of a shared physically perspicuous place does not leave us in the realm of undisturbed pure speculation. These are recognitions and perceptions which impel us towards entering the realm of action.

(1942a: 264)

In his studies of the pre-history of the word *Reich* (1943a, b), Trier drew on and developed his understanding of *Zaun* and *Mannring* as key concepts in the vocabulary of internal cohesion and external differentiation, drawing into the analysis the term *Reich*. The words *Zaun* and *Mannring* have links to political vocabulary of nations and rulers (*Volk*, *Herrschaft*, *Königtum*), but also to words connoting house, court, public speaking, the distribution of surplus and booty, and of communal duties (*reced* ‘building’, *rahde* ‘speech’, *rechnen* ‘to calculate’, *geruhen* ‘to deign to’, *ruchlos* ‘wicked, contemptible’). Thus *Reich* has meanings relating to ‘house’ and ‘speech’, but also to ‘calculation’ and ‘deigning’. As with *Ding* and *Mannring*, this gap can be bridged by appealing to the terminology of *Zaun* and *Hegung*. The *Reich* is the structure of moral order, it cannot exist without the duties of its members and its leader. In essence, the concept of *Reich* is the *hegender Mannring*; the *Mannring* is the platonic prototype of the *Reich* (1943b: 582–3).

In the organization of space and the domination of nature, in the creation of boundaries and divisions, we find the paradigm contexts of the plough, work, the ring of warriors: ‘organ of the formation of the will and every exercise of power of the *Volk* as a historical entity’ (1945: 114). Trier also links the etymology of *Arier* to the meanings associated with *Zaun*, and a range of meanings involving domination and mastery. Meanings ascribed to ‘Aryan’ are read into the context of the *Ding*, and morphological variants are given the meaning of ‘friend’, ‘companion’,

‘comrade’ deriving from the notion of ‘comrades of the ring’ (*Ringgenosse*). This word represents the ideal comradely virtues, those which each member of the ring seeks to display before the other and to the Führer, just as the Führer sets an example to those that follow him. Given the proximity of other peoples, *Arier* was also a racial designation, and the term evolved as an expression of racial distance from the surrounding peoples and superiority over them. Trier recalls the link between *pflegen*, *Pflicht* and *play*, and their original context in the *Mannring*. This ring defines a space for dance and music, but ‘play’ is not distinct from ‘duty’, ‘dance’ from ‘work’, etc. This is a society of strict discipline (‘eine Gemeinschaft von strenger Ordnung’) without divisions of labour, where:

‘to work’ and ‘to be together in the group’ are concepts which overlap to a great extent, much more so than a person who has grown up with the division of labour could conceive and who can oppose this notion only to some vague idea of a court autarchy.

(1945: 118)

Trier’s aim was to restore to the vocabulary its true order. The investigation criss-crosses the vocabulary, embedding the word *Pflug* (‘plough’) in its ‘home in etymology and in the history of everyday objects’:

This investigation has given the word *Pflug* a home in etymology and in the history of objects. The supposition that it belongs to *pflegen* (‘care for, cherish, perform an action habitually’) has been confirmed. From *Gabelholz* (‘wooden fork’) leads one path to *Pflug*, the other by way of *Zaun* (‘fence, perimeter’) to the *Ring* and to the cultic, artistic, and judicial domain of *Pflicht* (‘duty’) and *pflegen* (‘to care for something’, ‘to do something habitually’). The way was shown by *arare* (‘to work’) and *Aryer* (‘Aryan’). This became possible, once the names of peoples and terms for power and authority had been linked to the *hegende Mannringe* (‘warrior rings that embody a boundary’), and the root of *Reich* (‘domain, realm, empire’) had been recognized in the Indo-European **ǵer-*.

(1945: 150)

Trier thus steadily pulled additional terms into the stream of his etymologizing, in a sense condensing and compacting the vocabulary (since all the central concepts are reduced to a few basic notions), but also opening up an endless play of association and metaphorical re-reading, in

which the earlier analysis is read again through ever increasing numbers of connections. The political is re-grounded in the concrete, but the concrete is fused with the political.

Trier's death in 1970 coincided with student unrest at German Universities. Schützeichel, in a tribute to Trier, painted a picture of the situation at that time, using some of Trier's own metaphors:

The situation at that time was not favourable for an academic funeral service. To use Trier's own words, the *Hegung* was laid waste, just as the windows in the conference room of the Philosophical Faculty were shattered. The *Ring* of men, a concept that was articulated in particular by Jost Trier, i.e. the Philosophical Faculty, had broken up.
(1980)

While Trier might have seemed an increasingly marginal figure in the Federal Republic of the 1960s, with his continued exegesis of the vocabulary of collective duty, the *Ring* of warriors, and the Germanic unconscious (1957, 1965), his work has remained influential in some quarters (see for example Knobloch 1980). More importantly, Trier's case is instructive because his work is one chapter in the vexed history of structuralism and theories of change. It belongs to European post-structuralism and thus, ironically, was in tune with – or even ahead of – post-war developments in the United States.

Trier's retreat into the 'private garden' gave ironic confirmation of Goethe's dictum that the attempt to see a phenomenon simultaneously as *Sein* and *Werden* can lead to a kind of insanity. Etymology became for Trier a kind of therapy, a process through which the linguist could re-form and re-experience the cultic unity of the past. In his study of Jacob Grimm (Trier 1964: 5–6) Trier explicitly rejected the notion that the study of ancient or classical history (*Altertumskunde*) is concerned with things past. Rather its aim was the creation of pictures for the speakers of the language in which they could re-perceive the best in themselves. That best was identified with what was most durable in their Being, with what survived though change. This was Grimm's aim when he researched legends and fairy-tales, law, rights, folk-wisdom, grammar and vocabulary (1964: 6). The etymologist looks for that which endures (*das Dauernde*) and creates a mirror in which the speakers of the language can recognize their true selves. The true self is that which survives and is beyond the vicissitudes of time, linking the premodern and the modern.

Etymology is a healing art; it is a magical mirror in which the German people can see itself in its continuity and moral purity, in which the people can see again all that is good and wholesome about them and reject all that is bad. The good is defined as that which endures; the bad is the contingent, the transitory, the changeable which comes from beyond the 'fence', i.e. the foreign.

Synchronic linguistics and structural semantics thus turn out to be an explosive mix. For the phonologist, it might appear salutary to observe that phonetic similarity across different synchronic systems does not connote functional or phonological similarity, or to note that the same alphabetic letter need not have a constant phonetic or phonological value. For the semanticist, the consequences of adopting a structural approach would be much more far reaching. Key concepts such as *Geist*, *Sinn*, *Verstand* or even *Germane* or *deutsch* would cease to have a history. If the synchronic linguistic system expresses a culture-specific world view, the panhistorical uniqueness of a culture is simultaneously denied. To adopt a metaphor, it is as if national unity and autonomy were to be purchased at the cost of obliterating the past: a kind of theoretical Cultural Revolution. Trier the structuralist linguist saw an *état de langue* as a system of oppositions, with historical reality within a particular ‘slice’ in time. But this conceptually sealed world must be not only blind to its own history, but blind to its own *Landschaft*, to the objects and practices that accompany it.

Trier in effect came to reject the contentless, referentless structuralist system, the scientist’s notion of abstract, dispassionate investigation, chiding ‘extreme structuralism’ for its exclusion of language content in its pursuit of precision (1973: 463). Trier appears from this perspective as one who turned away from the (so-called) rigours of structural linguistics in spite of the reputation and success it had so swiftly brought him to lose himself in his ‘enchanted garden’. This garden was the *Germanist*’s private world, its language almost a group-private language of integration where the plough, obligation, work, play, dance, rhythm are magical hyponyms and the self recognizes itself in the mirror of the *Gemeinschaft*. For Trier, as for Jünger, the distinction between work and play dissolves or is transcended (see Brock 1941: 17).

Trier’s project in these etymological essays contrast with the ‘muscular Germanness’ of Weisgerber or Betz’ academic assertions of the existence of ‘an Indo-Germanic conceptual community’ as the common legacy of the Aryan peoples (Betz 1945: 276). Trier’s etymological writings represent *Germanistik* as performance, as conceptual praxis.

Post-structuralism and fascism

Trier’s war-time etymological works represent an attempt to achieve a different form of academic writing, one that aspires to the level of a form of personal praxis, that rejects academic rationality in the service of an allegedly higher ideological goal. This involves a rejection not only of the pure structuralist elements of word-field theory (an approach which itself threatened, as Trier had observed in 1934, to give rise to a terminological disarray or ‘Babel-like linguistic chaos’ [1934b]:

149), but of Neogrammarian uniformitarianism. However, Trier's evocation of the 'enchanted garden' puts him in step with, rather than counter to, many trends in twentieth century writings on language. For Trier's turn away from structuralism is a rejection not of its anti-individualism, nor of the idea that language and world view are inextricably linked, but of its emotional poverty, its ideological vacuity. Trier was a critic of the poverty of dispassionate science. He presented the study of language as fundamental to the study of culture, implying that modern societies are alienated: words from cultural objects, the present from the past, the intellect from the non-rational such as dance, rhythm, music.

Like many post-structuralists, Trier used etymological 'play' to point to conceptual relations and to trace the presences and absences of Being. He was in this well aware of his own historicity, and of the paradoxes that lie in wait for anyone who seeks to transcend their own time and place. In 1931 Trier had portrayed the scholar-intellectual as being in a 'dangerous situation'. The self-awareness that comes with being aware of one's own historicity leads him to wonder whether scholarly endeavour will survive, or whether his particular branch of scholarly inquiry will have a future. This sense of the precarious does not lead to renunciation; on the contrary, the scholar is drawn forward into new areas of inquiry, in the search for a new foundation to his existence. He is willing to entrust himself to the 'unknown heavenly bodies' of the new terrain ([1931b] 1973: 78). Etymology became for Trier that act of will and leap of faith.

The links between etymology and therapy are evident, as soon as one places etymological investigation into language alongside the attempt to reconstruct and heal the early wholeness of the individual psyche. In that play, the etymologist seeks to break through the constraints of linear time, to recapture the lost simultaneity of meaning, the lost union of the concrete and the abstract, the individual and the collective, the micro-social (the farm, the herd, the family) and the state. Everything was there at the beginning of the *Volk*, and it will be there at the end of time. The etymologist is the Cabbalist, straining for a glimpse of eternity in the here and now.⁷

THE STRANGE CASE OF SONDERFÜHRER WEISGERBER

Introduction

The career of Leo Weisgerber raises many interesting issues and problems. Some of these concern what might be termed the internal history of twentieth century linguistics, the development of synchronic linguistics, the rise of semantics as part of linguistics, the reception of Saussurean structuralism within Germany, the movement known as neo-Humboldtian¹ linguistics, etc. But Weisgerber's career also belongs to the history of German intellectuals in the Weimar Republic, the Nazi era and the post-war Federal Republic. Weisgerber saw military service in the First World War, and later wrote that the war marked a decisive boundary between an apparently secure world and one of socio-economic, but above all, 'spiritual' uncertainty (Weisgerber 1935b: 7). Language is a force that can rescue the German *Volk* in times of crisis (1935b: 57–8). The linguist is the guardian of the language, and the language is the bearer of all the experiences and wisdom of the people. The language represents the triumph of particularistic national culture over the categories of nature, and its continuity guarantees that the unity of the people can be preserved over the limitations of time and space.

Weisgerber can be presented as someone concerned with the rights of communities to their own mother-tongue, that is, as a defender of language rights and linguistic freedoms. As a German speaker, Weisgerber was particularly concerned with the rights of the German minorities in Eastern Europe and the threat of forced assimilation hanging over them. In this he belongs to the nineteenth-century European liberal nationalist tradition and to the wider political emancipation that brought the mother-tongues or vernaculars of Europe successively to intellectual respectability. Weisgerber published two works which argued strongly for the rights of the Celtic speaking minorities in Britain and France. The first of these, on Breton language rights, was published in 1940 (Weisgerber 1940a). The second, on the Celts of Britain, was published in 1941. These

works envisage the Celtic peoples enjoying renewed cultural autonomy and free national development in a future European order (1941: 54), optimism echoed by Karl Arns (1942: 95) in his review of Weisgerber (1941). In Weisgerber's inaugural lecture at the University of Bonn (held on 23 February 1944) he waxed lyrical on the topic of German–Celtic cultural ties. These works fall – broadly speaking – into the category of Nazi language planning, for they herald a new European ‘folk order’ under German hegemony. Germany's mission to the peoples of Europe had been outlined by Franz Thierfelder (1932: 257) in his ecstatic review of Schmidt-Rohr's *Die Sprache als Bildnerin der Völker*.

Study of Weisgerber's career up to 1945 reveals an increase in cultural narcissism and rhetorical triumphalism. However there is also a more subtle shift. Weisgerber's early papers are informed in part by the concern that our languages deceive us. Thus we need linguistics to correct the false world view that our languages create for us. But the world view that our languages give us is also the product of generations of attempts at mastering external reality. Ultimately Weisgerber comes to celebrate the private group-world that the German language creates for its speakers.

Four papers by Weisgerber from the 1920s

In his 1925 lecture ‘Word families and conceptual groups in the Indo-European languages’ (‘Wortfamilien und Begriffsgruppen in den indogermanischen Sprachen’), Weisgerber suggested that undue emphasis had been laid on sound changes in diachrony, and that more attention should be paid to the investigation of linguistic states, to language viewed as static ([1925] 1964: 16). The aim of the former should be to serve the latter. In considering relationships between words, we cannot simply follow etymology; we must consider synchronic relationships as well. Weisgerber recommends ([1925] 1964: 17) that we distinguish carefully between the term *Wortfamilie*, which should be used for words perceived to be formally related in synchrony, and *Wortkreis* which should refer to sets of words which are etymologically related. *Kind* (‘child’) and *Kindheit* (‘childhood’) belong both to the same *Wortfamilie* and *Wortkreis*, since they are both synchronically and etymologically related, but *Kind* and *König* belong to different word families since, though they are etymologically related, they are not perceived to be formally related in modern German.²

The lecture as a whole is concerned with a shift in perspective from semantics as the history of the meanings attached to word forms to an investigative enterprise where meaning is seen as an autonomous area of inquiry. Weisgerber prefers the term *Begriff* (‘concept’) to *Bedeutung* (‘meaning’) because the latter implies a dependency on, or gives priority to, linguistic form ([1925] 1964: 24). When we ask for the *Bedeutung* of a word, we isolate a form and then we ask for its meaning. We are thus taking linguistic form as a point of departure in the investigation of

linguistic meaning. This can lead us to error, as when in word geography we assume that a single form across a wide range of geographical areas refers to the same object. Not only may that object be different in different places, but the set of contrasts in which it partakes may be different. Weisgerber gives the example ([1925] 1964: 19) of the German words *Biene* ('bee'), *Hummel* ('bumble bee') and *Wespe* ('wasp'). We cannot take each of these forms separately and ask what they mean and give the meaning simply by designating an object to which they refer. As Weisgerber writes:

For in language the most important thing is not the object itself, but the concept that the members of the speech community have of it. That this concept varies from place to place and from period to period is so evident as not to require special justification.

([1925] 1964: 18–19)

The approach to meaning that Weisgerber labels *Bedeutungslehre*, *Bezeichnungslehre* or *Semasiologie* is a form of word history that treats words in isolation from their linguistic context and is concerned with classifying different types of meaning change (broadening, narrowing, etc.). It is an occasional servant of etymology, rather than a systematic discipline ([1925] 1964: 20). What is required is the transformation of *Bezeichnungslehre* into a field of inquiry concerned with objects, concepts and words ('zu einer Sach-, Begriff- und Wortforschung'). Here Weisgerber lays out his basic ontological system: the world is made up of objects (*realia*), of concepts or ideas, and language ([1925] 1964: 20).

The aim of the study of word formation is to give an account of the conceptual relationships that can be expressed between derivations of the same root. This will give us the key to the conceptual construction of a linguistic world (*Sprachwelt*) ([1925] 1964: 30). This task is performed by contrasting *Begriffsgruppen* with *Wortfamilien*. In the case of the word family of *Kind* ('child') and its derivatives (*Kindlein*, *Kinderei*, *Kindheit*, *kindlich*, etc.) there is a clear underlying conceptual unity ([1925] 1964: 30). The German reflexes of Latin *iungo* on the other hand do not form a coherent set and must be divided into at least three word families ([1925] 1964: 30–1). Many concept groups (*Begriffsgruppen*) do not share a common etymology: alongside *Glocke* ('bell') and *Glöckner* ('bell ringer') we have *läuten* ('to sound, to ring out') instead of **glocken*. The verb 'to die' is *sterben* but the noun is *Tod* ('death') ([1925] 1964: 32). Discussing the analysis of these concept groups, Weisgerber remarks intriguingly: 'it is in this way that we can uncover the source of many unclarities and errors in our conceptual operations' (ibid.). These kinds of observations, argues Weisgerber, give us an insight into the boundary around the concept formation of individual languages.

In his inaugural lecture given at Bonn University in 1925, Weisgerber addressed the question of ‘inner form’ (*die innere Sprachform*), a notion which, he argues, has been surrounded by confusion since it was first articulated by Humboldt in 1830 (Weisgerber 1926). Significantly, he is concerned with the importance of this notion particularly for the German language and argues that, now the true nature of the problem has been recognized by W. Porzig and E. Cassirer, progress can be made. The confusion with regard to this notion stems from two sources: the limited conception of language as the formal aspect of speech that has dominated linguistics and the individualism that has prevented any consideration of the relationship between individual and collective or superpersonal (1926: 241–2).

In order to understand the role of language in cultural and spiritual life, we must first consider, says Weisgerber, its role in the life of the individual (1926: 243). He takes as an example the case of someone who has developed aphasia with respect to colour terms. The patient was unable to link the name to the colour or the colour to the name, but showed no impairment of the visual perception of colour. The patient could, for example, describe a particular red as ‘cherry-like’ (1926: 243) or a particular blue as ‘violet-like’. However when asked to group strands of wool according to the gradients of colour (e.g. from light green to dark green), the patient was unable to grasp the organizing principle required. Weisgerber’s conclusion is that in losing the name the patient has lost a principle of organization or categorization (*ein Zuordnungsprinzip*), one that is conceptual in nature. The perceptions of a healthy individual are not of a colour spectrum of uniform gradient, but one perceived with divisions that reflect linguistic categories.

In this inability to group colours conceptually, these dysfunctional patients are similar to young children who have not yet learned colour terms. Linguistic development involves a switch from a primitive, concrete and immediate mode to an abstracting mode (1926: 245). Knowledge of language is knowledge of the correlational relationships between linguistic forms and concepts. Language as a symbolic system imposes order on the diffuse quality of our everyday experiences and impressions. If I know someone’s name, it serves as the centre and organizing point of a whole range of impressions, memories and thoughts about them. Language does not simply reflect or mirror intrinsically given categories or concepts, it creates and defines them:

In that one learns and applies such terms as red, green, yellow etc. the riotous chaos of our sense perception of colour is clarified and takes on a fixed orderliness.

(1926: 247–8)

The concept of ‘red’ does not come about so much because we succeed in perceiving the common qualities of things designated red, since from the point of view of our experience of reality, there

is no essential or underlying unity to all red phenomena. Rather the shared linguistic sign fuses together these intrinsically disparate sensations into one individual and distinct unit. The domination of the symbolic over the actual is of course even greater in the case of higher abstractions and representations where the world of perceptual experience is marginal.

Weisgerber then goes on to sketch some of the ways in which German, ‘the language which generally thinks for us’, might be studied with these considerations in mind. Once again, Weisgerber returns to colour terms, noting that in fact most languages do not have a purely abstract system of colour designation, that even some Indo-European languages are still in a stage where colour as a quality has not been totally abstracted from the object which has the colour. Thus in Lithuanian there are four or five words for grey depending on whether we are talking about wool, cattle, human hair, etc. In Russian there is a whole range of ‘brown’ terms. The word ‘blond’ which applies normally only to human hair is a German example of this phenomenon. For Weisgerber, Indo-European languages originally had no superordinate or categorical terms for colours (1926: 252–3). Indo-European speakers would have seen the world much like the aphasic who has lost the abstract colour terms or the child who has not yet acquired them. This can be seen in the etymologies of many colour terms where we can find the name of the object that carried the colour in question. It seems that for Weisgerber the move from what one might term concrete colour terms to abstract ones is progress, since it allows the speaker conceptually to dominate reality in a much more radical way. In his 1926 lecture on pedagogical praxis (see discussion below) Weisgerber is concerned with the acquisition of proper conceptual categories: ‘the small child sees only “trees”, not the “forest”, only “houses”, not the “town”’ (1927a: 21).

If we look at the sense of smell and its linguistic categorization, we can see clearly the close link between vocabulary and perception (1926: 253). Though we have as human beings a very acute sense of smell and it plays a very important part in our experience of the world, we lack a set of superordinate linguistic categories to describe our perceptions in this area. Compared to the domain of colour, our language of smell is primitive, though there is no perceptual reason why this should be so, given that, according to Weisgerber, our sense of smell is reducible to a basic vocabulary of sense impressions in the same way that our perception of colour is. We grow into a world where sight is the dominant sense and this is a direct reflection of the language into which we are socialized.

Other areas that, for Weisgerber, would be fruitful for investigation include terms for aspects of character, kinship terms, body parts, names for the practitioners of crafts or trades. One could do contrastive analysis of preposition systems, or look at terms that have no equivalent in neighbouring languages. French, for example, has no special term like German *Heimat*. We can look at how different languages express verb tense: in German, suppletive verbs like the verb ‘to

be' (*bin – war – sein*) are comparatively rare compared to Old Irish. Weisgerber notes that a whole different set of problems arises when we compare German with non-Indo-European languages (most of his examples are taken from German and French), especially with regard to the division of the vocabulary into word classes.

In his 1926 lecture on the teaching of conceptual clarity in elementary education ('*Begriffspflege in der Grundschule*', Weisgerber 1927a) the importance of teaching *Sprachinhalt*, linguistic meaning, as well as linguistic form, is coupled with a concern that those meanings be respected as entities not given in nature or attached mechanically to linguistic forms, but the products of history. Linguistic content is not fixed, it is not given in advance, it is something that has evolved through the experience of thousands of years (1927a: 13). It is the duty of the current generation to go on with and to complete the work of the previous generations. General fears about the nation's conceptual health are also expressed:

Do we not everyday see evidence in all strata of our people of appalling conceptual chaos? What this means for a people which can only assert its place in the world through the quality of its work, I need hardly spell out in full.

(1927a:18)

Weisgerber argues that, given that the conceptual structure of a language always contains a degree of arbitrariness, we need to make sure that our thoughts fit precisely into the categories laid down by our mother-tongue (1927a: 19). Here, rather than presenting the categories of a language as something that needs to be overcome in order to reach a full understanding of reality, Weisgerber presents them as the ideal to which speakers must aspire in their conceptual lives, a collective template into which individuals must strive to slot their thoughts.

In 'The sense of smell in our languages' ('*Der Geruchssinn in unseren Sprachen*') published in 1928, Weisgerber turned his attention specifically to the ability of language to construct a world of experience and thereby to influence how we perceive the world through our senses. The linguistic resources available to talk about smell are the most limited of all the senses, a fact that has been observed by chemists, physiologists, psychologists, and linguists. We need to distinguish clearly, he argues, between unambiguous labels for objective excitants or stimulants, and terms for subjective or qualitative experiences. The first belongs to the specialized language of chemistry and should be left to chemists to sort out, since this language is so far removed from the world of ordinary people (1928: 124). Weisgerber points out that in our every day talk about smell we, like chemists, tend to use the names of the objects with characteristic smells (1928: 125). From a scientific point of view, these are too vague. Different roses, for example, have different fragrances

(1928: 126). Modern standard German has lost the specific morphological marker for verbs in *-enzeln* to designate the smell of the respective noun and these specific morphological features seem to lack staying power in the language. An expression like *rosenartig* ('roselike') is not even on the same level of development as *erdbeerfarbig* ('strawberry-coloured'), since *rosenartig* does not specifically refer to smell.

Weisgerber then goes on to survey the linguistic resources available in German to talk about smell. Expressions like *angenehm* ('pleasant'), *erstickend* ('choking'), *ekelhaft* ('disgusting') should be left out of consideration, since they characterize the general effect on the person, rather than the smell. There are terms with a certain degree of abstractness: *blumig* ('flowery'), *duftig* ('fragrant'), etc., but they nonetheless rely on a concrete association (as opposed to colour terms like *rot*, 'red'). With expressions like *sauer* ('sour') and *würzig* ('spicy') we seem to be dealing not only with smell, but also with taste (characterized by many linguists as a case of synaesthetic transfer). Weisgerber however argues that we must distinguish between cases of genuine synaesthesia (due to the same effect, 'auf Grund gleicher Gefühlswirkungen') and the actual (simultaneous) excitation of more than one sense. This is especially true of the domain of smell, where taste, touch, temperature and pain may enter into the equation:

The various elements frequently merge into a unity which is very difficult to analyse. These elements frequently remain opaque to us, because linguistic facts hide the true state of affairs.

(1928: 129)

Our language misleads us into thinking that adjectives like *würzig* refer equally to both taste and smell. For the experience of having a common cold soon teaches us that what we call 'taste' is frequently 'smell'. This is confirmed by physiologists whose explanation for what Weisgerber terms this peculiar self-deception is that we cannot localize our perceptions of smell in the same way as we can our other sense perceptions. But Weisgerber prefers an explanation based on 'the normal kind of superficial observation' with which people go through life. We are from childhood socialized into thinking and saying that spicy food *tastes* spicy (1928: 130).

While we can therefore identify adjectives which in fact refer primarily to smell, they fall far short of the kind of general categories we possess for colours. In this sense, we are dealing with a linguistic deficit here (1928: 133). Various explanations have been offered for this deficit, especially arguments for the intrinsic vagueness of our perception of smell, etc. But Weisgerber is concerned above all with these categories as reflections of the lessons language teaches us. So-called scientific investigations are in fact heavily and unknowingly influenced by linguistic categories

(1928: 134). For Weisgerber, it is no surprise that language, which is constitutive of thought, should have such a profound effect on our scientific reasoning. There is no objective reason why our perception of colour should so radically differ from our perception of smell. In the case of taste, there has long been agreement that there are four basic qualities: *bitter* ('bitter'), *salzig* ('salty'), *sauer* ('sour'), *süß* ('sweet'), but, Weisgerber contends, these are primarily linguistic categories (1928: 136). A linguistic analysis is therefore a prerequisite for psychological analysis (1928: 139). Weisgerber argues that a set of abstract categories for the perception of smell is possible; simply, that we lack the linguistic means to conceive of them, just as the aphasic who has lost all colour terminology cannot even conceive of the task he is being set (1928: 141–2).

Why does this domain lag far behind the others, why are these terms in such a primitive linguistic and intellectual state, considering that all sense domains must have started out on equal footing? Some languages are more advanced in general than others in terms of developing abstract categories (1928: 142–3). Why should European languages in general still be at a primitive stage in this particular area? The reason put forward by Hans Henning (1924), that we perceive smell in a more concrete, object-directed way than colour, etc., Weisgerber contends could equally be seen as consequences of this deficit. Weisgerber calls for more contrastive studies both with exotic languages and with different periods of different languages. He also asks what can be done to overcome this linguistic problem (for he does seem to see it as a problem). Of those terms which are not object-based, *duftig* and *stinkig* are too general, and *aromatisch* ('aromatic'), *balsamisch* ('balmy') and *ätherisch* ('ethereal') are foreign words. This leaves *würzig* ('spicy'), *brenzlich* ('smelling of burning'), *muffig* ('musty'), *ranzig* ('rancid'), only the first two of which are mentioned by Henning. Henning gives in addition *blumig* ('flowery'), *fruchtig* ('fruity'), *harzig* ('resinous'), *faulig* ('putrid'), but Weisgerber objects that they are not all purely qualities of smell, but general attributive terms and three of them are object-based (1928: 147). One partial solution to the first problem would be to revive a lost piece of morphology, the ending *-licht*, which was an alternate to *-ig* in earlier stages of the language (1928: 147–8).

While chemists and physiologists are interested in isolating pure entities, in terms of everyday speech we are interested both in pure and in composite smells, since the latter play such an important part in our daily lives. Most of the smells around us are composite. While the physical, the psychological and the linguistic are all intertwined in the development of these categories, it is to the life of a language within a speech community that we must look first in any investigation, if we are not to be misled by its categories (1928: 149–50).

This article is something of a puzzle, if we approach it from the viewpoint of contemporary linguistics. What is the problem for the linguist is the fact that, accepting for a moment Weisgerber's evolutionist premise, the linguistic terminology for smell is less well-developed than that for

colour or taste? What does it matter if we are misled by our language into thinking that we taste things primarily in the mouth and that smell is secondary? What is the loss to the ordinary speaker of the language? Weisgerber might argue that our psychologists and chemists are being deceived by the categories of the language. But this might argue for making them aware of those categories, but not necessarily for changing them. Another argument Weisgerber might use is an evolutionary one. Languages develop by a process of abstraction; the progress from the concrete, immediate world of the senses gradually to a greater perceptual distance, a greater abstractedness from immediate sense impressions. For some reason, one aspect of our vocabulary has lagged behind the rest, putting it on the level of so-called primitive languages. We need to civilize it. But if our language lies to us about something so basic, how can we really know to what extent we have been deceived? In the case of the senses, Weisgerber seems to assume that we can have independent, non-linguistic, access to reality, otherwise we would never know that we have been tricked by our language. But in other areas this non-linguistic access to reality is much more problematic (in the area of belief, ideology, ethics, etc.). Another consequence of Weisgerber's frame of reference is that the development of abstract or conceptual categories is the equivalent of the Tower of Babel, but it is man not God who creates linguistic diversity. In striving to rise above the immediate and disordered categories of the experiences of the senses we build separate linguistic worlds. In imposing a linguistic-conceptual grid over reality we construct autonomous linguistic fictions within which we live and which imbue the external world with the reality of our categories. This changes the balance of power between us and the world, since the impact of reality on our senses is now subsumed within linguistic categories. But of course the balance of power between us and our language shifts dramatically in favour of the language, putting us at the mercy of its categories at the same time as it enables us to control and dominate the external world.

Weisgerber regards the Indo-European languages as having progressed unevenly from the perceptual immediacy of concrete colour terms to the abstract categories of the modern Indo-European languages. On the one hand, he regards this as progress, since he suggests, for example, that we can talk far more cogently about colour in German than we can about taste or smell. Yet this control of the world through abstract categories, this abstract conceptual mastery, is also a fictional mastery, at least to some extent, in that we believe that our linguistic categories are reflections of inherent properties. We are brainwashed by language to accept them as universal and completely trustworthy reflections of reality. This suggests (ironically) that the aphasic, the child and the primitive are living in a conceptual world much closer to the structure of the real world. Weisgerber is not clear on this matter. When he argues that smell like colour could be reduced to a small set of basic perceptual units ('experimental psychology shows that our perceptions of smell can be reduced to a small number of basic qualities', 1926: 253), he seems to

suggest that the abstract categories of colour mirror something real in the nature of human perception. It implies that they are not simply arbitrary fictions, imposed like an abstract grid over the boundless variety and flux of experience.

The most celebrated of Weisgerber's papers from this period is his 1927 polemic entitled 'The study of meaning – the wrong road for linguistics?' (1927b). This paper is often seen as heralding a decisive shift in the direction of semantics in Germany, one that brought Germany more into line with the pan-European trend towards synchronic structural analysis. In discussion of this shift, it is often taken for granted that this was a step in the right direction, for the link with structuralism is perceived as an index of pan-Europeanism and therefore of academic and scientific respectability. It was written against the background of an intellectual scene still dominated by the waning orthodoxy of the Neogrammarians, under which questions about linguistic content had generally taken second place to the investigation of linguistic form.

Weisgerber seeks to bring order into the terminology used to talk about meaning and to emphasize the dual nature of the sign as a unity of form and conceptual meaning. Among the terms with which he grapples are *Bedeutung*, *Bezeichnung*, *Begriff*, (*gedanklicher*) *Inhalt*. What Weisgerber asks is the following: is renewed interest in what he terms *Bedeutungslehre* a sign of progress or the last gasp of a dying and discredited approach to the study of language? In order to give an answer, Weisgerber first traces its origins and development. *Bedeutungslehre* began as an ancillary discipline to lexicography, where glossaries of foreign, archaic or dialectal words were prepared and problems arose as to the ordering of multiple entries. This concern with the ordering of the glosses was then transferred to monolingual dictionaries. For Weisgerber, therefore, the roots of *Bedeutungslehre* are in the giving of ordered glosses to linguistic forms. The linguistic form is the point of departure for the study of meaning. With the development of comparative linguistics and the study of Indo-European etymologies the study of meaning took on a new role. Once obvious corresponding forms had been identified, where both form and meaning were recognizably related, the task became one of uncovering cognate relationships that had been obscured by either change in meaning or form or both. Just as sound laws were developed in order to constrain and bring order to the profusion of possible formal relations, so laws of semantic change were necessary in order to present purely arbitrary or highly far-fetched associations. As Weisgerber points out, this brought the notion of change of meaning to the fore (1927b: 163). As the material accumulated, *Bedeutungslehre* developed aspirations to be an independent discipline. Weisgerber identifies two important strands (1927b: 164). The first which he terms the 'logico-classificatory' approach arises out of classical philology (associated with names like Reisig, Haase, Heerdegen). The second arises out of the *Völkerpsychologie* of Steinthal, Lazarus, Geiger, whose names loom large in the works of Tobler and Hecht.³ This direction Weisgerber terms 'psychological-explanatory'

and with these claims to explain psychological phenomena, in particular that of change of meaning, comes the pretension to be an independent discipline.

What then of the notion of *Bedeutung* itself? It is Weisgerber's contention that this word has been misused or misapplied and that its meaning has been widened in a misleading way. The history of the *Bedeutung* and *bedeuten* shows a shift from a gloss applied to a foreign word to one used in the explanation of German words as well, a development in which Weisgerber sees 'foreign influence' (perhaps Latin *significatio*, 1927b: 165). In this development, *Bedeutung* has diverged from *bedeuten*. Grimm's *bedeuten* is defined in terms of explaining or glossing unfamiliar words, but Adelung's definition of *Bedeutung* reads as follows: 'the concept, which should be evoked by a word or sign' ('der Begriff, der durch ein Wort oder Zeichen erregt werden soll', 1927b: 166). For Weisgerber, the normal semantic relationship of the *-ung* noun to the verb infinitive is that of *nomen actionis*. But in this case we have the much rarer case where the noun is the resultant object (as in *Zeichnung*, 'drawing', from *zeichnen*, 'to draw', for example). Here Weisgerber locates the source of much of the trouble. With the loosening of its ties to the verb, the noun became liable to all kinds of irregular shifts (1927b: 166): 'In this way, most probably under foreign influence, a disturbance was brought forth in the terminological system concerning the "word" which persists even today.' In a footnote, Weisgerber comments that the case of *Bedeutung* affords us an example of how an imprecise term can lead us to create false concepts (1927b: 166n).

Weisgerber then traces the development of the term *Bedeutung* down to the notion that meanings are individual-psychological entities attached to word-forms. In a survey of how modern semanticists have used the terms *Bedeutung*, *Bedeutungswandel* ('meaning change') and *Bedeutungslehre* ('the study of meaning') Weisgerber concludes that the relational character of *Bedeutung* has been lost sight of, i.e. the fact that it expresses a relation between two entities: a word and a concept or representation (1927b: 170). This is further elucidation of his contention that the word has been unjustifiably reified in the history of linguistic thought. *Bedeutung* is thought of as an independent entity that can be studied within an independent discipline, rather than as an ancillary term in the elucidation of how linguistic forms are linked with concepts. The origins of the problem are to be found in the extension of the word to include the meanings given in monolingual dictionaries and in a false conception of the nature of the word, one in which the word form is seen as the basic or essential aspect (1927b: 170–1). Matching his ideal definition of *Bedeutung* with those employed by other linguists, Weisgerber naturally finds incoherence or contradiction in their definitions of *Bedeutungswandel* and *Bedeutungslehre*. Warming to his task, he argues that *Bedeutungslehre* can only serve usefully in its original role as the servant of lexicography and etymology, since both these sub-disciplines properly take linguistic form as

their point of departure (1927b: 175). He dismisses recent attempts to systematize *Bedeutungswandel* by Wellander, Sperber and Carnoy, and calls *Bedeutungslehre* a ‘pseudo-science’ (1927b: 177). Any attempt to buttress *Bedeutungslehre* with a *Bezeichnungslehre* (which deals with referential designation) is doomed to failure, since this pseudo-objective point of view also falsifies our view of language.

The essential point about a language is that it is constitutive of the reality within which reference takes place. What is required is a *Begriffslehre*: the recognition that concepts are subjective and mutually determining (1927b: 178). A footnote indicates the affinity with a key notion of Saussure’s *Cours*. What follows is however rather less Saussurean:

They [linguistic concepts] are, in short, the templates [*Arbeitsformeln*] in which the experiences of thousands of years are gathered; into which a linguistic collectivity has impressed its most important decisions; in which quite naturally non-intellectual forces are also strongly reflected. The descriptive, contrastive and historical investigation of this store of concepts, its special characteristics, its development in different languages, that is the task of conceptual analysis [*Begriffslehre*] within linguistics [. . .].

(1927b: 178–9)

Weisgerber illustrates his point with a comparison of Waag’s treatment of kinship terms with his own (1927a: 179–80), making the structuralist point that only a small subset of the possible distinctions are actually made in German. This is evident when we compare German with other languages (1927a: 180).

In conclusion, Weisgerber sums up his view of how we talk about matters of meaning within the study of words (*Wortlehre*). The word should be seen as a linguistic unit (‘sprachliche Einheit’) which has two essential elements: form and concept (‘Die Lautform, der Name, und der Inhalt, der Begriff’). If we look at representation from the point of view of the concept, then we talk of *Bezeichnung*. If we take linguistic form as our starting point, then we are dealing with *Bedeutung*. The relationship between *Name* and *Objekt* is one of *Benennung*. The relationship of linguistic concept to reality could be termed *Sachgehalt*, the referential content. As the editor of Weisgerber’s collected essays (H. Gipper) explains (1964: 97n), many of these terminological recommendations did not survive in Weisgerber’s work. *Name* for example later reverted to its more familiar use as ‘proper name’.

In an interesting final footnote (1927b: 183n), Weisgerber seems to want to defend himself from the charge that he is being normative or autocratic in talking about others having a ‘false’ understanding of *Wort* and *Bedeutung*:

The value judgement ‘false’ is here completely justified, since what is at stake is not whether we most usefully understand by the terms ‘Wort’ and ‘Bedeutung’ one thing or another; rather, the rejected understandings are unclear interpretations that miss the point of the notion that everyone has of these terms and which I hope to have laid out in a clearer fashion.

At the end, Weisgerber comes back to unite his theoretical discussion with the common understanding of ordinary users of the language, but in a sketchy and rather contrived way. Here we see expressed the dilemma of the semanticist: to clarify ideas seems to imply the correcting of false notions not only among academics, but also among the general public. But this makes the linguist a very specialized language planner and an elitist at that, one who does not trust the people’s understanding of their own language.

Themes in Weisgerber’s early work

Weisgerber is very much concerned with questions of mastery and dominance, and with the human will in relation to language. Do we, as human beings, control language or does it in some sense control us, creating a world for us which we receive passively? This linguistic world is one which we inhabit without fully realizing that it is in a sense artificial, that it is not as referential as the average speaker is inclined to believe. As Humboldt makes clear, language is not merely a means of communication, but an actual world (‘eine wahre Welt’), which is interposed between reality and *Geist* by the inner workings of the force of that *Geist* (1926: 249). Individuals inherit a language which shapes them; their experience of the world comes at second hand. But they do not have to struggle alone for linguistic mastery of reality, they inherit the cumulative wisdom of all the past speakers of the language (1926: 250). This inheritance is something which the individual has little opportunity to scrutinize. It is the task of linguistics to undertake that scrutiny as part of an investigation of inner form, an investigation which has two major parts. The first is the conceptual structure of the vocabulary, the second the syntactic means of expression (1926: 251). An understanding of the nature of inner form will give us ‘the key to the evaluation of everything that is said or thought in this language and to everything that is done by its speakers as a consequence of their mental or intellectual strivings’.

But this power of language to organize our conceptual world comes at a price. For we do not directly experience reality in all its vividness; our perceptions are mediated by the *Begriffswelt* of language. This gives us great power, since we can ‘process’ the world at great speed and with great efficiency; in contrast with the aphasic we appear masterful. We achieve a high order of synthesis

in our understanding of the world, an ever-widening conceptual horizon, but we lose a sense of the individual phenomenon, the experience of the moment. There is a danger of the mechanization of experience (1926: 248). Human beings, the creators of categories, are in a sense at the mercy of the categories they inherit which can become the master of their creators.

For Weisgerber, the role of language in structuring cognition raises a question with respect to one's own mother-tongue. We do not have conscious knowledge of our mother-tongue, since it is the medium of thought and cannot be thought about. Hence we cannot fully know the correctness and general applicability of our intellectual activities. To understand our language and hence our ways of thought in a conscious, rational way, we must find a means of standing outside and objectifying the system. This can only be achieved through contrastive linguistic analysis. Without such an investigation, we remain conceptually blind, since the language with which we think is, paradoxically, foreign to us. We need to contrast linguistic systems in order to find out what our language is saying through us (1926: 251).

Weisgerber's emphasis on the monolingual acquisition of the native language did not therefore imply a rejection of the need to study and learn foreign languages. However the somewhat paradoxical aim of studying foreign cultures is that of reaching a better understanding of one's own. By studying a foreign language one is confronted with a foreign categorization of the world. In this way one comes to see one's own language from the outside, with language learning acting as a kind of linguistic consciousness raising. This follows with perfect logic from the image that Weisgerber had given of the individual obliged to accept on trust the world view given with socialization. Presumably the monolingual peasant will live and die in the vice-like grip of the mother-tongue, never gaining an external standpoint from which to reach a higher level of self-knowledge.

Weisgerber comes close to suggesting that our languages lie to us and need to be put in their proper place in the total scheme of human perception and cognition. Yet he also implies that it is only through language that we come to grips with reality, that we master the world and operate upon it. In language we inherit the wisdom of our forebears, and thanks to the inheritance of language we do not start from scratch in our efforts to understand the world. But if we say that language deceives us, are we implying that our ancestors have been deceived and have passed their blindness onto us? Once destiny has made this choice for the individual, the world view into which that individual is socialized comes to seem natural. Other languages do not embody the same set of values, they are not equivalent. Even between the closely related languages of Europe, languages that have been involved in a continual process of linguistic and cultural exchange, we can detect profound differences. Translation is no simple matter, and the speakers of language tend to 'naturalize' their world view and have difficulty in grasping how others see the world (1930b: 69).

Linguistics as envisaged by Weisgerber is not a descriptive discipline that aims to produce accurate accounts of the history and structure of languages. Description is merely the prerequisite for the real task of linguistics which is conceptual clarification. The aim is to reach an understanding of the conceptual structures that have evolved with our language and continue to shape out thinking today, of what Weisgerber calls ‘die sprachliche Begriffswelt’ in which we live, think and act. Linguistics thus takes on a vital role within all areas of inquiry that involve language. In the totality of human academic endeavour (*die Gesamtwissenschaft*) linguistics should have a role that one could term supporting or foundational, according to one’s taste ([1925] 1964: 35).

This normative activity needs to take place against the linguistic chaos (*Sprachverwirrung*) that is evident in society. Linguists are in part responsible for this, for they have failed to produce the systematic guides to the conceptual structure of German required in the struggle against empty phrases and modish clichés that currently hold sway in the language. Hence the need of organizations such as the Deutscher Sprachverein to work against declining standards (1933b: 232). As in the past, an external threat can serve to galvanize the people into protecting their language and into a greater sense of their own linguistic identity (1933a: 225). The mother-tongue is a cultural rather than a natural possession; it requires cultivation and active effort on the part of its speakers, if it is not to fall into a state of confusion and banality. Linguistics is a discipline which ultimately oversees the conceptual health of the entire people. It should undertake a complete reappraisal of the foundations of intellectual life. In this way, linguistics will be at last returning to the insights of Humboldt, who saw in the study of language the key to all other spiritual–intellectual domains (1926: 256).

The existence of variation within a language raises a potential challenge to Weisgerber’s holistic views. Weisgerber recognizes (1931d: 594ff.) the existence of variation along social lines (speaking of *Schichten*, ‘strata’, rather than *Klassen*, ‘classes’), along gender lines (citing Otto Jespersen) and between *Hochsprache* (‘standard language’), *Mundart* (‘regional speech form’) and *Sondersprache* (‘trade or sub-group languages’). Linguistic change is bound up with these forms of synchronic variation. Weisgerber cites Vierkandt’s model of cultural change, one which gives three basic causes for change: need, maturity and the impact of dominant personalities (1931d: 598–9). Weisgerber’s answer is to speak of a complementary relationship, and of a kind of linguistic division of labour, a hierarchy of different levels that together make up a whole, a whole which encompasses the entirety of the experience of the people, from daily life to high culture (1931d: 604). There is a kind of dialectic between *Mundart* and *Hochsprache*.

Weisgerber raises the question of how languages develop their individual world view. His answer seems at first paradoxical: through language change. The generations that speak and use the language gradually form and structure the language to be the expression of their collectivity:

We can now answer the question of how a particular world view enters a language: obviously through the work of the linguistic community, through the participation of all those who have been bearers of the language in the course of the millennia.

(1930b: 170)

This is in its way a brilliant (if circular) solution to the problem of change. How do we explain how the language transcends the vicissitudes of time and space, geography and experience? By making the language the repository for the results of those diverse experiences, of all the accumulated wisdom that had proved itself useful ‘in order to master and dominate the world intellectually’ (1930b: 71), Weisgerber incorporates change as adaptation. The language is a progressive and collective project of a people: the language makes them a people and the people make the language.

This does tend to imply that languages can be successful or unsuccessful in mastering the world. It might follow from Weisgerber’s imagery that languages (and therefore peoples), like species, will disappear if they fail to master and dominate the external world. In that case, the languages that are currently extant must be the languages that are the fittest. Linguistic might is right. Weisgerber saw the attacks on the German language in Eastern Europe as powerful alienation attempts on healthy peoplehood (*Volkstum*). There is great pressure on these Germans to give up their language, but to give up one’s language is to renounce oneself. This is something much clearer to the common person than to many in the academic world (1930b: 71).

It is evident that for Weisgerber there is a loss involved should ethnic Germans in Eastern Europe give up their language. They would not simply be exchanging one world view for another, equally valid. Behind the relativism and the recognition of cultural diversity, there is a sense of cultural history and evolution as a struggle for mastery of the external world and of each language continually being tested and confronted by the challenges of history. History is a search for transcendence, for to master nature is to naturalize it in the image of a culture. There is a basic drive or instinct towards etymological speculation and investigation, an *Urtrieb* (1931c: 787).

The issue of whether a world view can be ‘correct’ points to a central ambiguity in Weisgerber’s relativism. In a discussion of the socialization of the individual through language, Weisgerber speaks of the vulnerability of the individual, since the world view into which people are socialized is presented and perceived as natural, as the only possible or correct one. Weisgerber puts the word ‘correct’ (*richtig*) in scare quotation marks, recognizing the methodological problem that the whole question raises. It is not the individual, but the language that thinks, answering many questions of life even before they have been raised in the mind of the individual (1930b: 121). In striving to master the mother-tongue in its completeness, we are in effect striving to be mastered

fully by it (ibid.). On the other hand, the language gives the individual the results of thousands of years of collective intellectual labour. In this sense, the individual stands on the shoulders of all those who have gone before (1930b: 119). The question of the correctness of the world view of a language can, it seems, be seen partially in pragmatic terms, partially in terms of increasing levels of abstraction. For Weisgerber, as mentioned above, the history of a language is primarily the history of a drive for transcendence. The linguistic community seeks not only to master the external world, but also to rise above the baser sides of human nature. Language is above all the ‘vehicle of the intellect, specifically of a nature to free human beings from their subordination to instinctual, emotional behaviour and to lead to an understanding of the world’ (1930b: 121).

Linguistic community and mother-tongue

The notion of mother-tongue is central to Weisgerber’s work. A concomitant to his belief in the centrality of the mother-tongue in the creation of the individual’s cultural identity was a negative attitude towards bilingualism⁴ and towards the notion of a single world language. No language can serve as a world language in any profound sense:

Such a language might have some use within certain, narrow boundaries, but there is not even a distant possibility of a true world language, which would represent a unifying bond for all humanity, as a unified form for a unified way of thinking.

(1930b: 126)

A bilingual speaker of French and German, he says, can say some things in one language which they are unable to say in the other. This is at least in part due to their differing patterns of thought or *Denkweise* (1926: 254). The bilingual individual is usually deficient in both languages, lacking a profound sense of either (1930b: 120). Bilingual individuals are prone to be overly critical or indecisive (1933c: 7); the bilingual Luxembourgish elite itself links its lack of creativity and fondness for destructive criticism to its bilingualism (1933c: 9). Intermediaries between cultures should be firmly rooted in one of them (1933c: 10). Believing that language boundaries are a natural reflection of the diversity of mankind, Weisgerber has no time for the concept of the citizen of the world, the rootless *Weltbürger* of the German Enlightenment (1933b: 226).

Weisgerber makes frequent reference to the fact that speakers of German are not unified under one nation in the post-war order, that they are spread over a number of countries in Europe and threatened by the linguistic conflicts that are arising there. These speakers (*Volksgenossen*) are heirs to the same heritage, i.e. the German language, passed down from distant generations. This

common heritage transcends both external differences in custom or way of life and the gulf that exists between them and the political core of the people (1930b: 176). All branches of the *Volk* have made their contribution to the development of the German language (1931c: 725). He talks of the linguistic conflicts that threaten German minorities (almost one eighth of the German people) on the edges of the German-speaking territories. Hence the health of the German language is crucial for the survival of the *Volk*, whose bodily unity (*Einheit des Volkskörpers*) has been sundered by political boundaries (1933a: 226). These Germans are the victims of history, shut out from the central political unit, but unmistakably linked to it through language (1933b).

One question that needs to be addressed more fully at this point is Weisgerber's notion of the linguistic community. Central to Weisgerber's linguistics is the notion that an individual language is the cultural property of a people. It can be put alongside other social institutions such as law and custom and expresses the world view and accumulated beliefs and customs of its speakers. Forming an intermediate world between the speakers and the external world, its categories come to constitute the reality within which those speakers live and think. But what kind of entity is this linguistic community? When Weisgerber talks of a *Sprachgemeinschaft* (for example, 1929: 44),⁵ he seems to imply that speaking the language is a necessary and sufficient criterion for being a member of the community. But we would have to add the rider: speaking the language as a native speaker. Though he recognizes the definitional problems posed by multilingualism and variation, these are for Weisgerber peripheral matters in his monolingual, monocultural model of the linguistic community, one that presupposes a shared culture going along with a shared language.

Weisgerber (1929: 89–106) talks of the community, the *Gemeinschaft*, as having a unitary view of the world, one that must be investigated as the property of individuals in the present, but also in the historical relationship of the language to the *Volk*. The history of a language is the history of the continuous contributions of its speakers. It is our only real link to the past, and in growing up into our mother-tongue we are absorbed by it, opening up for us the experiences of many thousands of years:

What the grappling of many generations with the world of nature and the world of the conceptual and spiritual has produced is here ready for us, not as 'science', but as the living linguistic possession with which a whole linguistic community thinks, experiences, acts and works onward.

(1929: 99)

The terms 'linguistic community' and 'people' seem to be used interchangeably here. However Weisgerber argues that language is the prime characteristic of a people, and as a consequence

everyone must recognize ‘the natural right of the linguistic community also to its unity as a people’⁶ (1929: 101). So the terms are distinct, but any separation of the two (the national community and the linguistic community) is against that people’s natural rights. The attachment of each people to its language can be seen from the bitterness associated with any struggle over language where we see illustrated how a linguistic minority clings to its language and a dominant minority realizes that without linguistic assimilation there can be no general assimilation. Weisgerber mentions Elsass (Alsace) and South Tyrol as examples. Where the people sees the core of its values, there it will fight for the role of the mother-tongue.

Given that he has defined the basic human unit as a collective united by a common mother-tongue, Weisgerber understandably sees the necessity of dealing with the whole question of variation, particularly the question of dialectal overlap, but also class, occupational and other axes of variation. Can we, he asks (1929: 104), give the boundaries of the German language in time and space? While recognizing a degree of arbitrariness, Weisgerber still argues that we can see the contemporary New High German spoken idiom as a clearly differentiated unity (1929: 105). The existence of variation and special languages merely shows that the speakers do not all participate equally in the linguistic means at their disposal, a fact that Weisgerber had previously adduced in showing that language is a superindividual entity (1929: 106).

In Weisgerber’s book-length contribution in *Wörter und Sachen* (1933/4) published on his accession to the editorial board, Weisgerber discusses the key notions of peoplehood, state and race (*Volk*, *Staat* and *Rasse*) and the question of how their interrelationship is to be understood (1933/[34]: 149–50, [1933] 1934: 141). For Humboldt, the most important two factors are *Abstammung* and *Sprache* (‘*Abstammung*’ can be translated as ‘lineage’ or ‘descent’). Weisgerber is anxious to clarify the relative importance of these and other concepts; he concludes that the notion of linguistic community should be the starting point for any investigation of the others, since it is the most easily determined and isolated. The notion of race is controversial ([1933/]1934: 145). We must look for the unity within the diversity of speech forms that languages demonstrate. Weisgerber also mentions Schmidt-Rohr’s decision to change the title of his book in the second edition (Schmidt-Rohr 1932, 1933a). There is no attack here on race theory within linguistics, simply a discussion of the priority of some concepts over others. The discussion of Günther’s attempt to link dialect boundaries within German to racial divisions within the German people is sceptical (Günther 1930),⁷ but Weisgerber is concerned above all with an assertion of the common characteristics of the German people. Whatever we decide about the influence of race on dialect, we can be sure that this basic unity transcends any particularistic racial variation.

When we come to look at Weisgerber’s *Die volkhafte Kräfte der Muttersprache* (1939), the notion of *Volk* is crucial. There is no ambiguity in this work about whether a linguistic community

is bound by ‘blood’ ties or not. This work opens with a foreword explaining the position of the work in the new German school curriculum, and a mention for the Sudeten Germans, whose return to the Reich coincided with the writing of the book. This book is full of the rhetoric of duty and action, a style one might term ‘muscular Germanism’. However, while the emphasis is as ever on the role of language in the creation of a linguistic community, Weisgerber makes it clear that race is an important component of national identity. Two things, he says, are necessary for national achievement and development: a common will and a common understanding or mentality. The most important factor in maintaining this common will over the generations are links of blood (*Blutgebundenheit*). The world view of the language is fundamental to common understanding (1939: 73). Weisgerber subsequently defines the mother-tongue as the force that brings a community to the realization of its identity, a community bound by consanguinity and homeland (1939: 83). Language works therefore to bring racial groups to the consciousness of their own identity; it is the historical force that brings these latent unities to their explicit formulation. Language therefore operates in history to link race to territory to world view (Weisgerber 1938b: 50–1). It makes the *Volk* out of the racial group. This is not a universal feature of all peoples and all situations; the German people is the only people that is named after its mother-tongue, and that shows that the destiny of the German people is inextricably bound to its language.

The name of the language (*deutsch*), and the relation of terms for the people and land (*Deutschland, Germane*) for terms for the language, was a continuing preoccupation of Weisgerber and his contemporaries. Weisgerber’s discussion of the term *Muttersprache* had unsurprisingly concluded that the term was in its origins Germanic, and that it was part of group or words such as *Mutterboden, Muttergrund, Muttervolk, Mutterland, Mutterstadt, Mutterhimmel, Mutterluft, Mutterlicht* (1938a: 434–5).⁸ The term *Vatersprache* (‘father-tongue’) never took hold, a sign that the idea of *Muttersprache* best reflected the sensibilities of the Germanic people and their direct emotional bond with their language. These studies represent the retrospective application of the mother-tongue ideology to early history, in which etymological evidence is adduced to show the Germanic or German nature of the concept, and the special place of the language in the formation of the German people. Thus Trier (1943c) found the origins of the name *Germanen* to be *heimisch* (‘indigenous’, ‘native’); and Weisgerber (1937, 1940c, 1943), Lerch (1942b) and Schaefer (1943) constructed various ideologically appropriate hypotheses about the word *deutsch*, and in the same context considered the nature of labels such as *welsch* (Weisgerber 1944).⁹ Trier also approached the term ‘Aryan’ as arising, like other national terms, on the basis of the *Ding* and the *Ring*, i.e. out of the primal institutional power of the *Volk* (1945: 114).

Celtic studies, Leo Weisgerber and National Socialist linguistics¹⁰

The 1936 mission statement of the series published by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Keltische Studien looked to a revival of Germany's role as the leader or centre of Celtic studies. Germany was to be the centre around which the satellite disciplines in Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Brittany would revolve.¹¹ Among the founding members were Ludwig Mühlhausen, Adolf Mahr,¹² Josef Weisweiler, Eduard Schwyzer and Gerhard von Tevenar. At the inaugural meeting held jointly with the University of Berlin on 22 January 1937, the head of the Irish Folklore Commission, Séamus Ó Duilearga, gave an address which was subsequently published in 1943.¹³

During the war, the main focus of the engaged Celticists was upon Brittany. Gerhard von Tevenar, Willy Krogmann, Ludwig Mühlhausen and Leo Weisgerber either published general works on Breton language and culture or spent time in Brittany as operatives for particular agencies. Krogmann published a work on the Breton 'freedom struggle' entitled *Brittany for the Bretons! (Breiz da Vreiz! Die Bretagne den Bretonen!)*, Krogmann 1940). In addition, there were increasing numbers of general guides and pamphlets produced by official agencies. In 1941 the navy's propaganda department published a short book entitled *Die Bretagne* for the education of its personnel serving in Brittany, and one of the publication series of the NSDAP produced a work entitled *Kleine und grosse Völker* ('Big and small nations') which included a section on 'Raped Celts' (Lange 1941)¹⁴. The publications on Brittany embraced a broad spectrum from scholarly-philological investigations, which attempted to link the Celts to the mainstream of mainland European culture and language by reconstructing residues of 'continental Celtic culture' (Weisgerber 1943b), and scholarly bibliographies of works on Breton or by Breton writers and intellectuals (Berthou 1943), to works on archaeology and prehistory (Hülle 1942), general works by scholars and academics written with reference to the contemporary political situation, and popular pamphlets and propaganda. Weisgerber's interest in the Celtic nature of mainland Europe had been expressed in earlier work, in which the after-effects of the migrations of the Celts were linguistically reconstructed. These wanderings reflected the 'life force' (*Lebenskraft*) of the Celts (1931a: 151). Weisgerber argued that there had been sustained and profound contacts between Germanic peoples and Celts in the early history of Europe (1931a, 1931b, 1935a).

The modernizing impulse

The leading figure in Celtic studies in Germany in the National Socialist period was Professor Ludwig Mühlhausen of the University of Berlin.¹⁵ Mühlhausen studied first at the University of

Zürich (1908–9), and then comparative linguistics (including Indo-Persian, Slavic and Celtic languages) in Leipzig where he completed his *Promotion* with a study of loan words in Welsh (Mühlhausen 1914). His later publications include an edited edition of the *Mabinogion* (1925) and an edition of Irish folk tales (1939).

Mühlhausen's role as the prime mover within Nazi Celtic studies became part of a controversy over the history of the discipline which flared up in Germany in the early 1990s (Luyken 1996). The republication of Mühlhausen's 1925 study of the *Mabinogion* by Stefan Zimmer brought a sharp response by Simon and Broderick (1992). They pointed to Mühlhausen's friendship with Douglas Hyde (an article about which is omitted from the list of Mühlhausen's publications), Mühlhausen's leading role in the Nazi professors' union and demonstrative Nazism while at the University of Hamburg, his willingness to inherit posts vacated by dismissed Jews (Rosenbaum, Pokorny), his relationship with Werner Best, his role in the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Keltische Studien, his radio-propaganda activities in relation to Ireland between 1940–2, and his participation on behalf of Celtic studies in the mobilization of scholars in the humanities behind the war effort (*Kriegseinsatz der Geisteswissenschaften*). According to Luyken, this review and a thesis submitted at Trinity College, Dublin by Joachim Lerchenmüller in 1994 on the history of Celtic studies in Germany, had led to 'trench warfare' between historians of science and Celticists (see Tristram 1996 for a reply to Luyken). Lerchenmüller's thesis was published in 1997 and offers a wealth of information and insight into the political engagement of German Celticists. The uproar created by Lerchenmüller's study also reveals the continued sensitivity of scholarly practitioners to the investigation of their disciplinary history.¹⁶

After military service in the First World War, Mühlhausen worked as a professional librarian at the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, then taught at the University of Hamburg from 1922–36. He became ordentlicher Professor in Berlin in 1936 as successor to Julius Pokorny who had been forced into retirement. Mühlhausen, who had been a member of the DNVP from 1919–27, joined the NSDAP before the National Socialist seizure of power, in 1932, and the SA in 1933.¹⁷ In a *curriculum vitae* dated 3 May 1942¹⁸ Mühlhausen reported that he had made six study visits to Ireland since 1925, and held lectures in Irish Gaelic at the University of Cork in 1928. These trips had awakened an interest in folklore studies in relation to Celtic. On becoming Ordinarius at the University of Berlin he had tried to broaden the focus of Celtic Studies, which tended to be exclusively philological in nature. This involved paying attention not only to present and past folklore, but also to prehistory. The founding of the Gesellschaft für Keltische Studien in 1937 and the associated publication series which he edited, also served these ends. In this way, Mühlhausen concluded, he was striving to restore to Germany its position of unambiguous pre-eminence within Celtic studies.

A conference of Celticists held from 21–3 September 1941 in Wernigerode (Harz) at the instigation of the Einsatz der Geisteswissenschaften im Krieg (a body promoting the active engagement of scholars in the humanities in war effort) set up a special committee of Celticists to consider the role that Celtic studies could play in the war effort. This committee consisted of Adolf Mahr, Leo Weisgerber and Ludwig Mühlhausen, with Mühlhausen acting as secretary and chairman.¹⁹

The long-term goals of the society were defined by Mühlhausen in late 1941 in a letter to Dr Mentzel as those of developing active cultural links with the Celtic peoples of Europe, paying especial attention to Ireland and Brittany; the scholarly groundwork would be laid for a future political utilization of the high esteem in which the society was held. Mühlhausen asked for funds to buy books in France, which were now very cheap because of the war. The situation offered the chance to obtain for German scholarship collections that under other circumstances the French would have guarded jealously. Mühlhausen also pointed out that Dr Werner Best was an active member of the society.²⁰

Mühlhausen was a sharp critic of his contemporaries in Celtic studies in Germany, complaining to Sievers (11 June 1941) that there were only two German Celticists who were able to carry out propaganda broadcasts in Celtic languages, and that the rest had no idea about the living languages.²¹ Thus the burden had to fall on Dr Hartmann and himself. During his years in Hamburg he had become aware that Celtic studies, in Germany at least, were declining increasingly into a ‘discipline of the not worth knowing’ (‘Wissenschaft des Nichtwissenswerten’):

Many pieces of nice white paper were being covered with consideration of such earth-shattering questions as if, when, how etc. a long *o* came to be transformed into a long *u*, in *Old Irish*, *Old Welsh* or wherever. The living languages had no place in this system.

(letter of 11 June 1941; original emphases)

In 1941 von Tevenar (1941a) pointed out that German scholarship had neglected the contemporary situation of the Breton language since Heinrich Zimmer’s study published in 1900. Only in very recent years, as a consequence of the increasing political importance of ethnic and minority questions in Europe, had a number of studies appeared.

Von Tevenar gave Weisgerber (1940a), Krogmann (1940) and Zur (1930) as examples of recent German language publications.²² Von Tevenar evoked a new Breton cultural revival based on the literary periodical *Gwalarn*, which had been founded in 1925 as a supplement to *Breiz Atao* and which became an independent publication in 1927. The journal’s manifesto (by Roparz Hémon and Olivier Mordrel) presented it as a ‘powerful and conscious reaction’ on the part of the

educated younger generation ‘against the old-fashioned tastes and fuddy-duddy folksiness of the so-called regionalists with their crass fooleries’ which have informed Breton literature. *Gwalarn* was to offer something more than children’s tales and tedious rhymes; it was directed at a modern Breton elite in the same way that the periodicals from the capitals of Europe are directed at the educated reader. The journal was to be in a pure ‘classical’ style, free of localisms and with a unified orthography. It was to offer something of intellectual substance, and through translations acquaint the reader with developments in both Celtic and foreign literatures: ‘we want to try and make something of our language’. As a consequence of its intellectual aspirations and its rejection of Gallicisms in the style, the journal had been accused by some of being cut off from the people, but von Tevenar argued that it had played a central role in the revival of Breton culture and in the campaign for Breton language rights (von Tevenar 1941a: 217–18).

In a similar vein, von Tevenar, in a study of the contemporary situation and prospects for Irish Gaelic, remarked on how little attention had been paid by German linguists and folklorists to Irish as a living folk and literary language (1941c: 307).

Non-specialists such as Heinz Kloss also turned their attention to Brittany, to Celtic studies and to a critique of British linguistic and cultural imperialism within the British Isles (Kloss 1941b). In 1940 Kloss received a letter from Rudolf Schlichting in France reporting on the situation in Brittany (letter dated 9 October 1940). Schlichting reported that many Bretons had a positive attitude to the Germans:

From a racial point of view there would be no objection to a Germanization of the Breton population. It is evident that we have no interest in promoting the Breton national consciousness, once the separation (*Abtrennung*) is accomplished. Not a penny should be spent on the promotion of the Breton language. The French language will however be replaced by German. In one generation Brittany will be a predominately German country. This goal is definitely attainable through the schools, the authorities, the army and the press.²³

Kloss and von Tevenar, the secretary of the Gesellschaft für Keltische Studien and a member of the Deutsches Institut für aussenpolitische Forschung in Berlin, had quite an extensive correspondence. Kloss had asked von Tevenar to write an article on ethnicity and language in Scotland for *Volksforschung* (letter Kloss to von Tevenar, 9.12. 1940). Von Tevenar offered comments on Kloss’ article in *Geopolitik* (Kloss 1941b), criticizing it for its omission of the official census for Ireland of 1926 and 1936 (letter of 9 September 1941). Von Tevenar reported that these showed Irish to be in a much healthier state than the figures given by the Gaeltacht

commission of 1926 suggest. The rise in the number of Irish Gaelic speakers reflected the successful education policies of the Free State, and the language was now back on an upward curve after it had been written off as dead. Von Tevenar emphasized to Kloss how vital it was for Ireland, in the context of its continuing struggle for survival as a people, that this point be understood, above all in Germany. Von Tevenar concedes that the true figures have not been easily available, and that he had obtained a copy of the official *Statistical Abstract* compiled by the Department of Industry and Commerce thanks to the Irish embassy.²⁴ Von Tevenar referred Kloss to Mühlhausen for further advice on these questions, and also promised to ask Professor Reinald Hoops (University of Innsbruck) to write on Lowland Scots. Kloss responded (letter of 6 October 1941) with a question about the names of Celtic languages, asking about the terms *Gälisch* ('Gaelic') and *Irisch* ('Irish'). Kloss also asked whether he could obtain through the Irish embassy a contribution from Ireland on the relationships between Irish, English and Anglo-Irish in the literature of the Irish state during the last 20 years. Von Tevenar replied (9 October 1941) that the terminology was already fixed, and that the correct term for the Celtic language of Ireland was 'Irish' or 'Irish-Gaelic'. As far as breaking the blockade was concerned, there were more important things that could not get through. He also corrected Kloss on his understanding of the sociolinguistics of Ireland, pointing out that 'Anglo-Irish' was the name of a literary movement not a literary dialect, and that linguistically these writers differed only in subtle ways from the English literary standard. Hoops, added von Tevenar, might not be interested in writing about Scotland, and he put forward the name of Herbert Wernitz. Kloss subsequently consulted von Tevenar on whether the English speakers in Wales were English immigrants or Welsh. Von Tevenar replied that these English speakers were basically Welsh, there having been no substantial immigration from England, and that they were 'victims of industrialization' (letters dated 16 October and 5 November 1942). Kloss and Dr Hildegard Pichler also corresponded with von Tevenar about cultural institutes and periodicals in Brittany, and Von Tevenar's contribution to *Volksforschung* on the Isle of Man (von Tevenar 1941/2).²⁵ Von Tevenar produced an extensive bibliography of writings on Breton (von Tevenar 1941d).

Writing about the history of the Isle of Man, von Tevenar compared its situation to Ireland:

When one considers the intensity of Norwegian and Danish conquest and settlement, the fact the Celtic language was nonetheless able to survive and evolve is a continual source of wonder. A similar process took place in Ireland, where Gaelic, in spite of the most severe persecution, was able to assimilate huge numbers of Scandinavian, Norman and English immigrants, and today, thanks to the sacrifice in blood paid by its political

fighters, it is once again the official language, and on the way to the reconquest of the majority of the people.

(1941/2: 287)

Other articles in *Volksforschung* (edited by Kloss) on Celtic or Celtic-related subjects included a piece by Hans Kuhn on the Orkney and Shetland Islands as sites of Norwegian settlement (1941/2) and by Eduard Eckhardt on ‘the Scottish language’ (1941/2). Eckhardt traced briefly the relationship between Scottish Gaelic, the Scottish language (i.e. Lowland Scots) and English, concluding with a description of the revived sense of a Scottish identity since the First World War and the move to create an independent literary language. In a contribution to the *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen* Eduard Eckhardt argued that folk life in Scotland had remained basically Germanic, at least in the Scots-speaking areas, and therefore Germans had more affinity with Scottish than with English, which was so thoroughly penetrated by foreign elements that it was statistically speaking more Romance than Germanic language. The alienation of contemporary England from its Germanic nature was mirrored in the infiltration of the language by non-Germanic loan words (Eckhardt 1944: 86).

Through journals such as *Englische Studien* and *Anglia: Zeitschrift für Englische Philologie*, which carried articles on a wide range of literary, etymological and linguistic topics, the discipline of English studies (*Anglistik*) found a role for itself in producing critical assessments of contemporary Britain (or England) from a racial, linguistic, cultural and political point of view, and emphasizing signs of cultural and national revival among the Celts. Hans Galinsky of the University of Berlin investigated the ‘word-field of fate’ in English (‘Sinnbezirk des Schicksals’), concluding that such a study could shed light on the erosion of the Nordic character of the British nation (1940/1: 323).²⁶ Following on from Reinald Hoop’s study of the Scottish Renaissance (1933), Irene Ziekursch (1941) looked at the works of C.M. Grieve, Compton Mackenzie, Eric Linklater, Edwin Muir and Neil Gunn, emphasizing Scotland’s new found faith in its future.²⁷ Ziekursch quotes Neil Gunn on Scottish identity as follows:

And here at last also I am prepared to make a strange admission namely that I do not mind whether it [Scotland] is called Celtic or not. I am well aware there is no such thing as racial purity in any nation. It is possible, indeed certain, that a strong underlying strain in the Scot is pre-Celtic [. . .]. Personally I find the word Pictish very attractive.

(1941: 326)

In the *Zeitschrift für neusprachlichen Unterricht* Karl Arns described the cultural renaissance in

Wales since the First World War, one which was bringing it in reach of a genuinely national culture (Arns 1936: 154) and M.F. Liddell (Dublin) discussed the prospects for a re-Gaelicization of Ireland, one which was threatened both by the power of English culture and the impact of the United States on Ireland (Liddell 1936: 216–17).

Mühlhausen had become the editor of the *Zeitschrift für Keltische Philologie* in 1941 with volume 22. But, according to a letter from Otto Huth, the head of the Ahnenerbe's section for Indo-Germanic Religious History (Abteilung für indogermanische Glaubensgeschichte) to Sievers (dated 30 April 1939), Mühlhausen was already the *de facto* editor in 1939.²⁸ Huth²⁹ suggests in this connection that consideration be given to broadening its scope to become a journal of Celtic philology and folklore.³⁰ In 1942 Mühlhausen came under consideration for a professorship of Celtic Studies at the University of Strassburg, in the context of a plan for an Institute for Celtic Studies there. Mühlhausen failed to get the chair, even though he was supported by Werner Best.³¹

However in 1943 Mühlhausen became director of section 19 of the Ahnenerbe, with responsibility for teaching and research into Celtic Folk culture. Taking up this position required him to transfer from the SA to the SS.³² A document dated 10 May 1942³³ outlined the tasks that such a department would carry out. The aim of the revived discipline of *Keltische Volksforschung* was to study the cultural values of the living Celtic peoples (the Irish, the Scots, the Welsh, and in particular, at present, the Bretons) from the standpoint of a National Socialist, i.e. from within a political discipline. Mühlhausen rejected the Sorbonne school of Celticists, who equated Celts with the 'romanized Gallic people' of mainland Europe. Today we should in contrast look upon the so-called 'island Celts', interwoven with the north and west Germanic peoples, as a creative element in the Nordic cultural sphere. No study of the north and west Germanic peoples could be carried out without reference to the findings of Celtic folk research. Research work should therefore concentrate on the following areas:

Celts and Germans as bearers of pre-Christian culture in Europe; the Celtic substratum in South and Central Germany as racially and culturally enhancing; Celtic and north Germanic heroic sagas and religion; Viking influence on the Irish, Scots and Bretons; Celtic determinants in north and west Germanic epic poetry and ornamental design; Ireland and Brittany as guardians of megalithic heritage; Immortality and death cult among the Celts and the Germans; the Celtic contribution the cultural flowering of the early Middle Ages; the Celtic peoples as victims and serfs of English and French imperialism.

Mühlhausen envisaged Celtic studies as an interdisciplinary enterprise, one involving primitive and early history, folklore, the study of religion, as well as linguistics, which had wrongly been allowed to dominate hitherto. There was a need for excavations and study trips, as well as for the creation of a proper specialist library. The work of the Celtic Institut in Rennes and the School of Celtic Studies in Dublin should also be encouraged.

On his appointment as Dean of the Philosophische Fakultät in Berlin, Mühlhausen wrote to Sievers expressing the worry that he would be denied an active role in events (letter dated 14 April 1943).³⁴ Sievers, writing to Himmler in connection with Mühlhausen's joining the Ahnenerbe, noted that he had for the past two years been in charge of radio propaganda directed at the Irish and the Bretons (letter dated 4 June 1943).³⁵

Mühlhausen, writing to Sievers to thank him for being granted the rank of SS-Untersturmführer, promised to do everything in his power to show that he was worthy of the honour. Mühlhausen reported that he did not regret the way in which the war was impinging on scholarly work; on the contrary he welcomed this as an opportunity to show how scholarship could play an active role in the war effort (letter dated 14 November 1943).³⁶

That active role was granted to Mühlhausen, in the form of an information-gathering role in France. A letter from the Ahnenerbe to Mühlhausen, dated 11 November 1943, reported that now, as an SS-Untersturmführer, it was possible for him to go to Brittany.³⁷ Replying to a letter (dated 5 January 1944) from the security police and the security service in occupied France³⁸ which had asked whether Mühlhausen had a practical political sense, Sievers praised Mühlhausen for his pragmatic sense of political matters, and considered that he was suitable for duties that went beyond the merely academic (reply dated 15 January 1944). He noted that Mühlhausen had been employed in intelligence (*Nachrichtendienst*) in the First World War, and that he was planning to set up base in Rennes in order carry out his intelligence duties for the security police. 'Should I simply send him straight to you in Paris?', asks Sievers.³⁹

Mühlhausen was involved in the promotion of recruitment to the French section of the Waffen-SS among the population of Brittany, according to his report on activities in France from 5 to 17 May 1944.⁴⁰ He noted that it was difficult to link the Breton issue too closely to this, given that there was at present no prospect of a clear stance being taken by the political leadership on this issue. Thus it was not possible to make any promises about a future special status for Brittany in relation to France, nor even about special cultural autonomy and the protection of Brittany from Frenchification (*Französisierung*). But without this prospect, the chances for success were minimal. Mühlhausen noted at the end of his report that the question of his involvement with the SD had not yet been clarified.

We can see here the National Socialist scholar in the role of modernizer, as the critic of the

dusty, introverted attitudes of his predecessors. The case of Mühlhausen also shows clearly the link between the rejection of traditional comparative philology by linguists of that generation, and their desire to reanimate the study of languages and cultures to take account of the lived experiences of the people themselves. In this they were very much ‘vitalistic’ critics of the philologists, these seen as interested in the past as something closed and complete, as ‘dead’. They looked to the past for a dynamic and continuing sense of purpose and a framework not only for scholarship, but also for the articulation of a new, modern European order within which Germany would preside over a set of folk nations, each with its respective vibrant culture.

Sonderführer Weisgerber, Nazi Germany and the Celts

Weisgerber’s role in the National Socialist era has been the subject of extensive critical scrutiny. The process began in the 1950s when Weisgerber was attacked by the journalist Walter Boehlich (Boehlich 1955). The case for the defence can be summed up as follows. Weisgerber’s approach to linguistics emphasized above all else language as a key to identity. In this sense it was antithetical to the race based theories of the Nazis and was in fact heavily criticized for this reason (e.g. in Glässer 1939c). Weisgerber was explicitly defined as a nationalist rather than a national socialist by the university authorities (Repgen 1986: 10). Weisgerber’s notion of ‘mother-tongue’ applies not only to German; he is concerned in general with language rights. Weisgerber was never a party member, he was in fact a retiring and scholarly Catholic, who while patriotic, never submitted to the governing ideology of race and as a committed Catholic could not have approved of the increasingly anti-Christian tendencies of the regime. While he did welcome the *Anschluss* with Austria and the incorporation of Sudetenland into the Reich, as did most of those involved, this was not political opportunism, rather entirely consistent with his position that political boundaries should follow linguistic divisions. Since 1924 he had argued that this was the natural form of socio-cultural community. This discussion of Weisgerber’s Catholic faith, and undeniable enthusiasm for the slogan ‘Heim ins Reich!’, is from Helmut Gipper (Repgen 1986: 21). Gipper emphasizes that Weisgerber had never used the loaded terms *völkisch* and *Weltanschauung*, but *volkhaft* and *Weltbild*.

In fact, *volkhaft* and *Weltbild* can both be considered Nazi terms, and were certainly not used consistently to exclude race. For example Edgar Glässer (1938), Ernst Kriek (1939a), and Fritz Stroh (1939a) all used the term *Weltbild* as an expression of race, or in contexts where the rhetorical emphasis was on race.⁴¹ Franz Koch, perhaps the leading activist in National Socialist *Germanistik*, contributed an essay entitled ‘Die Entwicklung des organischen Weltbildes in der deutschen Dichtung’ (‘The development of the organic world view in German poetic literature’)

to Huhnhäuser *et al.* (1939). It is also worth pointing out that Stroh also uses the term *Weltauffassung* for racial world view (1939b: 2). Of course, this is not to say that all scholars who invoked these notions necessarily understood them in the same way as Weisgerber. Attempts to define Nazi scholarship by incriminating certain terms (e.g. *völkisch*, *Weltanschauung*) in order to exonerate others (*volkhaft*, *Weltbild*) often, as here, serve a particular historical agenda.

Weisgerber's notion of *Sprachgemeinschaft* and *Sprachgenossenschaft*, continues Gipper, was neither political nor racial but 'spiritual' (*geistig*). Weisgerber cites Jewish intellectuals such as Cassirer, Gelb, Goldstein, Katz, Lévy-Bruhl, Schuchardt and Stern in his *Muttersprache und Geistesbildung* and these names are there in the unchanged second edition of 1939, one which was not passed by the censors (Gipper states that it is 'ohne die von den Zensoren verordnete Kennzeichnung', Repgen 1986: 22).⁴² Furthermore, in 1936 this book was designated as harmful to the National Socialist conception of peoplehood ('als ein der nationalsozialistischen Anschauung vom Volkstum abträgliches Buch', *ibid.*). Gipper contextualizes the attacks on Weisgerber in the shift within the Federal Republic towards structuralism and then transformational generative grammar. A conflict between *Sprachwissenschaft* and *Linguistik* followed, in which the younger generation rejected what they saw as an ideologically loaded and reactionary tradition. This new generation saw itself as representing a progressive and strictly objective scientific discipline. Weisgerber was heavily involved in this struggle, and gave too much of his energy to it (1986: 22–3). While Weisgerber's legacy survived and *Sprachinhaltsforschung* is thriving, Weisgerber is unknown in the United States. However his work is now finding recognition in Japan and Korea (1986: 24). Erben (Repgen 1986: 25–7) echoes this view of the patricidal sixties and the uncritical acceptance of transformational–generative grammar.

Helmut Gipper had earlier mounted a defence of Weisgerber (1964: 360n) against charges of nationalism, chauvinism or even racism levelled by critics such as Pätsch (1955), Boehlich (1955, 1964a) and Iordan (1962: 135, 402ff.). Gipper's argument is that Weisgerber emphasizes linguistic criteria in deciding membership of national-ethnic groups and makes no appeal to racial categories. Furthermore, Weisgerber was concerned not just with the rights of the German speech community but with the rights of all linguistic groups, as set out in Article Two of the United Nations Charter. For Gipper, Weisgerber's conception of the collective is neither biological nor political; the world view of a linguistic group in its most fundamental sense precedes (presumably in both ontogeny and phylogeny) political, religious or scientific differences, a defence which separates world view from culture.

Weisgerber himself lamented the lack of protection afforded the individual's reputation in Germany and the tardiness of the media in putting right damage caused by them (Repgen 1986: 10). Weisgerber replied to Boehlich in the journal *Wirkendes Wort* (Weisgerber 1955/6). Boehlich

had accused him of pro-Nazi sentiments and of peppering his books with loaded terms like *völkisch* and *Weltanschauung*. Weisgerber points out that terms like *Weltanschauung* and *völkisch* do not appear in his works, offering a prize to anyone who could find them. Boehlich (1964a) concedes this; Weisgerber uses *Weltansicht* and *völkisch* (and *volkhaft* and *arteigen*, which Boehlich views as Nazi concepts). He has however found one use of the word *völkisch* in Weisgerber 1933/4 (Boehlich 1964a: 732; see also Weisgerber 1936).⁴³ His argument is that he was right in general, if not in detail. For Boehlich, Weisgerber is the distorter of the humanism of Humboldt; his post-war Europeanism is a sham. Weisgerber avoided the question of the place of Jews within the German people, but, according to Boehlich, advised the authorities that arguments against Jews should not be so formulated as to adversely affect German minorities in other countries (1964a: 733, but Boehlich does not give a source for this).

On a later occasion, responding to Gerd Simon's *Sprachwissenschaft und politisches Engagement* (1979) in a letter to the publisher (Beltz), Weisgerber accused the contributors Simon and Török of an extreme level of 'libel [*Verleumdung*], defamation [*Diffamierung*], ignorance [*Unkenntnis*], insinuation [*Verdächtigung*]' and hinted at legal action (text of letter in Simon 1982: 43).

One early political assessment of Weisgerber in the National Socialist period was certainly far from enthusiastic. An evaluation dated 10 March, 1936 (Weisgerber was at that time professor at the University of Rostock) by the local branch of the National Socialist University Teachers' Union for the head office emphasized that Weisgerber's attitude to National Socialism was, behind a polite exterior, difficult to discern, and that he was a strict Catholic who maintained strong ties to Catholicism. In the light of this Weisgerber could not be considered as suitable for an active political role, and he was to be evaluated with great caution. The report concludes: 'I would like therefore to warn [you] about Weisgerber'.⁴⁴ However a later assessment, produced for the Ahnenerbe in November 1938, reported that investigation into Weisgerber's political reliability had revealed nothing against him, that he had an excellent academic reputation and that he was not recorded as being a member of the freemasons.⁴⁵

Maas (1988a: 277n) mentions briefly Weisgerber's wartime activities in Brittany, which he describes as mainly cultural, though also involving the passing on of denunciations to the authorities in Paris. However there is a much more complex story to be told, one that has been investigated in particular by Fréville (1979, 1985) and Simon (1982). To these studies has recently been added a comprehensive political history of Celtic Studies in Germany from 1900 to 1945 (Lerchenmüller 1997).

Fréville and Simon's works are based on archive sources found both in France and Germany. Weisgerber plays a central role in Fréville's account of Brittany under the German occupation;

Fréville puts Weisgerber's 'cultural' activities in the context of a grand stratagem to divide Europe into spheres of influence. Non-Mediterranean Europe would be under the domination of Germany, and the Mediterranean area would follow the hegemony of Rome. Werner Best, the head of the military administration in occupied France (1940–2) accorded Brittany a pivotal role as the southern Atlantic guard (balancing Norway in the north). To protect Europe from an Atlantic threat from the United States, defensive positions were required in Brittany and Ireland, or at least these needed to be areas falling within a strong German sphere of influence. Brittany was politically suitable because of its secessionist aspirations, and would play a key role in the setting up of a Celtic front against England, with the issue of Celtic political rights providing possible pretexts for intervention against English interests, in addition to its role in a classic colonial 'divide and rule' strategy in France. Protocols of the meetings of the Franco-German armistice commission in Wiesbaden show for example complaints by the French representative, General Huntziger, directed at his opposite number, General von Stülpnagel, about German support for the Breton autonomist movement.⁴⁶

This strategy required Best to control the Breton autonomist movement. According to Fréville, Leo Weisgerber, with his excellent academic credentials, was a key player in Best's cultural front strategy. Best had taken steps to see that Weisgerber's (1940a) book on Breton language and culture was distributed through official channels (Fréville 1985: 62). At the invitation of Best, Weisgerber was invited in August 1940 to participate in the cultural work of the Propaganda-Abteilung (under the control of the military authorities) and the German Embassy in Paris.⁴⁷ He received confirmation in September 1940 (Fréville 1985: 78–80). His primary role was to be a kind of 'regent' at Radio-Paris, with special responsibility for transmission aimed at the Celtic minorities in France, Ireland and Britain. Weisgerber's main Breton collaborator was the Roparz Hémon, the 'Celtic champion' (Modol 1993, 1994) (pseudonyms: Louis Nêmo, Katuvolkos, Pendaran). Weisgerber was given the title *Sonderführer* and was answerable both to the Propaganda Abteilung of the military government and the German embassy,⁴⁸ though his role gave him a high degree of autonomy. The rank of *Sonderführer* was generally given to civilians (even those without military training), mainly journalists who were placed at the disposal of the military authorities and could thus absent themselves from their normal place of employment (Simon 1982: 41–2).

Weisgerber met Major Schmidke in October 1940 in order to plan a weekly broadcast from Rennes of thirty minutes starting 1 November, and, from 1 April 1941, a programme dealing with Breton culture. It was intended that these programmes not be of a propagandistic nature, and that they avoid political topics. This was agreed between Hémon and Weisgerber in March 1941 in

Brest when they discussed the possibility of a Radio-Bretagne programme broadcast from Rennes on Breton cultural affairs (history, geography, customs, folk songs, music etc.) under the auspices of Radio-France (Fréville 1985: 81).

Simon (1982) gives the full text of a report submitted by Weisgerber in 1941 to his superior in France, Stoffregen. This report shows Weisgerber as anxious to win over the Bretons to the German cause, while at the same time seeking to avoid problems with the French authorities by any overtly political content. In this sense, the ‘purely cultural’ content of the broadcasts was also purely political.⁴⁹

Hémon became the leader of those who actively sought to restore and unify the Breton language in this period; Fréville depicts Weisgerber as the subtle and skilful manipulator behind the scenes, leading the Breton cultural movement from behind. Weisgerber was very concerned that steps be taken to standardize Breton, and he wanted push through orthographic and other reforms. According to Fréville (1985: 86), Hémon and other Breton activists were in fact not entirely convinced of the merits of these plans. Press makes the same point in the following way:

There was criticism of *Zedacheg*, very often linked to (1) suspicion of its having been created with the strong encouragement of the Nazis (there is some evidence for this and for Hémon’s involvement, but there is also evidence of Hémon’s opposition to a unified orthography: he felt strongly about the separate identity of *Gwénédeg* and keenly supported the very well-established *KLT* [an earlier standard orthography] – but along with others he had to accept it, and was later exiled as a collaborator, almost certainly without real justification).

(1995: 79)

Press however makes no reference to Fréville’s account of this question, nor to an article and a notice by Hémon in promoting the new system (Hémon 1941, 1943). This system had been promulgated at a meeting of Breton writers and linguists in Rennes on 8 July 1941, and was to put an end to the confusion of having two competing systems. Hémon notes that a language with just 1.3 million speakers can ill-afford such a ‘dualism’ and that the new system was received with great enthusiasm (1941: 296, 306). In his short supplement charting the progress of the new system Hémon conceded that adherence to KLT was one reason for a reluctance to switch to the new system (1943: 124). Hémon was presented to readers of the *Zeitschrift für Keltische Philologie* in his capacity as editor of *Gwalarn*, a journal intended for the Breton cultural elite.⁵⁰

A report on the second congress of the Celtic Institut of Brittany (Framm Keltiek Breizh) held in Nantes from 14–17 May 1942 noted that the institute had grown to a membership of 350

since its founding by Roparz Hémon and the first congress in October 1941. The report observed that the unhappy splits that have shaped the Breton cultural movement for the past decades are over, and that the prominent figures from all age groups and points of view have now been reconciled in the effort to ensure the building of a new Brittany with a truly Celtic character, one that is above political divisions. The congress closed with expressions of thanks to, among others, Professor Leo Weisgerber for his work with Radio-Rennes, in which ‘the attacks against the occupying power were further condemned and a better future and free cultural development in the new Europe promoted’.⁵¹

Fréville also argues that Weisgerber was anxious to put Breton studies within the context of Germanic philology and to promote the German language and German scientific method through Karl Epting’s Institut allemand de Paris.⁵² For Fréville, Weisgerber’s academic competence did not prevent him from firmly believing in the superiority of the Germanic race; nor did he have any scruples about putting his skills at the disposal of the military authorities of the Reich (Fréville 1979: 67).

Fréville quotes an article by Hémon issue from 17 of the journal *En Savadur Breiz* (1941) in which he argued that Germanic philology could serve in the revival of Breton since ‘the Nordic people are our parents’ (1985: 87). The journal also opened a section of German language and Germanic philology. Fréville records that Weisgerber was also much concerned with dialect levelling, and with the promotion of Breton as an official language which officials in Brittany should be required to know. This, Fréville contends, was the consensus of Best, Epting and Weisgerber, and their views were reflected in article ‘Breton as official language’ in *Arvor – Journal hebdomadaire des amis de la langue bretonne* (23 March 1941). Hémon also argued for the development of pan-Celtic studies (Fréville 1985: 88–9).

Fréville portrays Hémon as a gifted intellectual seduced by the vision offered by the members of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Keltische Studien (who included Werner Best himself, Fréville 1985: 63) of the origin and development of the Celtic peoples, and by his admiration for Leo Weisgerber. Among German Celticists there was a desire to ally the Germans and the Celts against ‘Latinism’ and humanism. Hémon, reports Fréville, was opposed to the Jews but saw Latinism as the great enemy (Fréville 1985: 75ff.).

When Hémon fled France after the Normandy landing he went first to Strasbourg, then to Marburg where he was under the protection of his mentor Weisgerber. He was finally arrested in March 1945 near Limburgan-der-Lahn, tried for collaboration in May 1945 and sentenced to ten years imprisonment. However he was allowed to leave for Ireland in 1946, and taught in Dublin until 1978 (Fréville 1985: 93).

Fréville also documents Weisgerber’s role in the dismissal of the prefect of Rennes, François

Ripert, seen as a Gaulliste and opposed to Bretonist aspirations. A document cited by Fréville from the National Archives in Paris⁵³ shows Weisgerber to have been a conduit between Breton autonomists such as Roparz Hémon and Yann Fouéré⁵⁴ and Werner Best in their campaign against Ripert. Ripert was succeeded by Jean Quenette on 12 May 1942. For Fréville this represents proof positive that Weisgerber, contrary to his subsequent statements, played an active role as a political operative in France.

Weisgerber and mother-tongue rights

The key to the intellectual controversy surrounding Weisgerber is the notion of ‘mother-tongue’. This question was also crucial for Weisgerber’s discussion of the case of Schmidt-Rohr. Weisgerber argued (1971b) that Schmidt-Rohr’s refusal to give primacy to race represented a form of resistance to the prevailing Nazi orthodoxy (Schmidt-Rohr’s *Die Sprache als Bildnerin der Völker*, 1932, became in its second edition *Mutter Sprache*, 1933a), adding that anyone who did not live through the Nazi period was in no position to make judgements. However the idea that Weisgerber’s notion of *Muttersprache* was a focus of a polemic against Nazi race theories of language is not supported by the evidence. The so-called attack by Glässer on Weisgerber (1939c: 53–6) falls within the bounds of a normal academic exchange; Glässer points out (correctly) that Weisgerber offers contradictory and confused accounts of the relation of language to race.⁵⁵ In spite of Weisgerber’s worthwhile efforts, he is simply mistaken about the fundamental concept (1939c: 57). By contrast, Schmidt-Rohr’s writings are described as ‘Jewish effusions’ (‘jüdische Schwärmerei’, 1939c: 54).

An article by the editor of the semi-official Nazi publication *Zeitschrift für deutsche Bildung* on the notion of ‘Muttersprache’ is based explicitly on ideas and examples drawn from Weisgerber (Hunger 1939a). In a review of a volume on the new approach to the teaching of German, Hunger praises Weisgerber’s contribution (Weisgerber 1939) as essential to an understanding of language in education (1939b). Weisgerber himself later published an article in the *Zeitschrift für Deutschwissenschaft und Deutschunterricht*, a short-lived merger between the *Zeitschrift für deutsche Bildung* and the *Zeitschrift für Deutschkunde* edited by the same Dr Karl Hunger. Here the notion of *Muttersprache* is linked not only to the great deeds and inner resolution of the German people past and present but to the reunification of the German people and the new world mission that stands before the German language, one in which linguistics has an important part to play. In this article the concept of *Muttersprache* (and those of *Mutterboden*, *Mutterland*) are unambiguously and expressly linked to the goals that Hitler has set for the German people (reference is made to Hitler’s speech in 1937 in Breslau, made ‘on the eve of great events’, where

he talks of 95 million Germans, not of the 68 within the then national borders, 1943a: 17). The ‘folkish strength’ of the mother-tongue (‘die volkhafte Kraft der Muttersprache’) is a constant throughout German history. The new world mission for German is also defined in relation to Hitler, in particular to a speech made by the Führer about the role of a German Academy. The spirit of January 18, 1871 and January 30, 1933 marches on towards victory in the present struggle, the aim of which is ‘the eternal German people and German empire’ (‘das ewige Volk und Reich der Deutschen’, 1943a: 18). Römer (1971, a response to Weisgerber 1970a) argues forcefully that Schmidt-Rohr, while he did attack key elements of Nazi dogma on race and made fun of the ‘Nordic effusions’ (‘nordische Schwärmerei’), was himself, even before he capitulated under pressure, hardly a cosmopolitan liberal. He conceded that Jews were a part of the German people, however he was quite clear that they exercised excessive influence and were in general a harmful element in German society.

It is not possible to accept that the linguistics of mother-tongue was in any sense oppositional. This has been clearly shown by the materials gathered by Simon (1979b), Römer (1985: 162–5) and Ahlzweig (1994), but this aspect of the mother-tongue tradition has failed to communicate itself to the wider community of linguists.

Gipper himself was at the centre of a controversy surrounding the chair of general and comparative linguistics in Münster, in which he was labelled a reactionary exponent of Weisgerbian linguistics. This controversy coincided with a discussion of the merits or otherwise of the term *Muttersprache* and its appropriateness as the title of a journal.⁵⁶

One problem for Gipper’s approach lies in the following: in a discussion of contrasting world views Weisgerber points out that the German word *Volk* is not equivalent to the French *nation* (1931c: 787). This being so, it is evident that none of the discussion of the relationship of a particular *Volk* to its language can apply directly to the French situation. Logically, what Weisgerber says about *Volk* applies only to Germany. The relativism only works on the paradoxical assumption that all linguistic situations are akin to the German one. Weisgerber implicitly promotes the fusion of cultural identity and vernacular in the *Volk* as the norm. On such a model, the language of primary socialization, the mother-tongue, is also the language of high culture and socio-cultural unity – a state of affairs that is very far from the norm if we look at different societies across the world.

In judging Weisgerber’s work this perhaps scholastic quibble can be set alongside the accumulated effects of hundreds of pages of unwavering cultural narcissism, of which the following might serve as a summation:

The basis of this unity [of a linguistic community] is the world view [*Weltbild*] of the

shared language that has grown out of the results of the labour of all antecedent adherents of the language. So inseparable is this world view from territorial habitat [*Lebensraum*] and destiny [*Schicksal*], from the talents and dispositions [*Anlagen*] of our physical and spiritual [*leiblichen und geistigen*] ancestors, that only though this world view can the continuity and groundedness [*Bodenhaftigkeit*] of this spiritual development be understood, without which development the dynamic force of peoplehood [*Volkstum*], which transcends time and space [*raumüberspannend*], would be unthinkable.

(1933a: 230)

This quotation illustrates that the link between one generation and the next is not merely linguistic. The words *Lebensraum* and *leiblich* show that a common environment and heredity are also important. But of course the emphasis is on *Geist*, a notion which, like the language, must be both all-embracing and distinctive. It must express the totality of German uniqueness in fulfilment of the ideal of perfect national self-understanding (*Sich-Verstehen*) and a united, communal will (1933b: 232).

Weisgerber the redeemer

It is evident that Weisgerber aspired to play an active and public role in the ‘new’ Germany. What emerges is not the shy, retiring Catholic that Gipper evokes; rather a confident and ambitious cultural activist, one concerned with national policy questions of language, education, and social discipline.

The insight that words are not simply names of things, shared with Saussure, scarcely supports the vast edifice of cultural assertiveness which Weisgerber constructs. A language is viewed as activity, as the creator of a world view and therefore of a world real unto and for itself, self-sufficient, progressing towards an ideal future of complete mastery over the senses and through the senses over the external world: the language is the end and the means to the end, it is both the form and content of thought. It gives us the world and is our world. It coerces and dominates, it is progressively refined and increasingly abstracted. At the heart of Weisgerber’s vision is a vacuum, not least an ethical vacuum. A language, far from serving as a means of discussion, of exchange, of learning about the world, gives the individual the world ready analysed. The individual has no choice and no freedom to reject this world view, since it begins to take hold of the imagination before the development of any independent critical faculties. Indeed the development of reasoning skills, which takes place in tandem with linguistic development, must perforce be dominated by the conceptual framework already given in the language. The individual is born to live in a posture of prostration before the accumulated wisdom of the ancestors.

Weisgerber was hailed on his death as ‘the most important linguist of our time’ (Knobloch 1986: 161). In 1936, in the triumphalist Nazi journal *Volk im Werden*, Weisgerber had also been hailed for his achievements. Kurt Stegmann von Pritzwald named him and his 1929 book *Muttersprache und Geistesbildung* as the saviour of linguistics from the domination of sound-laws, a methodology which had been allowed to determine notions of ‘the relationships between peoples’ (1936: 196). Linguistics had fallen into a ‘grammatical’ rather than an ‘organic’ conception of language, one in which the speaker had been ‘experimented out’. A national discipline (*Nationalwissenschaft*) had become a rule-governed discipline (*Gesetzeswissenschaft*). Now linguistics was returning to the study of the *Volk*, in a new state founded on ties of blood and language (1936: 196–7). The times were ripe for the engagement of linguistics in the national cause, just as they had been in 1800, when Germany (i.e. the linguistic community of German speakers) reached further than the Reich (the political community). Stegmann’s call for a revitalization of linguistics was echoed by Fritz Stroh (1937, 1939a). Stroh was looking for a linguistics that would have something to contribute to society; that new linguistics of ‘folk linguistic inner form’ should be the Humboldtian tradition which the historical–grammatical linguistics of the nineteenth century had pushed to one side, one associated with Ipsen, Weisgerber, Trier, Schmidt-Rohr among others (Stroh 1937: 189).⁵⁷

For Stegmann the linguistic definition of *Volk* – as the force that binds when the state does not – coexists with the racial definition of peoplehood. The organicist ideal is the reintegration of the political, the racial and the linguistic, one that will represent the triumph of the will over the contingencies of history and politics, and the redemption of the German people through their language towards which Weisgerber was working.

‘A COMPLICATED YOUNG MAN WITH A COMPLICATED FATE, IN A COMPLICATED TIME’

Heinz Kloss and the ethnic missionaries
of the Third Reich

Introduction

The politically explosive question of Germans outside the Reich looms large in the *Germanistik* of the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. When we think of the ethnic Germans, the *Volksdeutsche*, we are normally concerned with Germans in the East, in the Baltic States, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Russia, etc. But there were substantial German populations in other parts of Europe, especially in Italy, Denmark, France and Belgium; in addition there were Germans scattered throughout all the continents of the world. One of the most powerful centres of German diaspora was the Americas, which consisted of both older established communities and the new immigrants who had been flooding to the American continent from the late nineteenth century onwards. But it was widely felt that the Germans of the United States were merging into main-stream Americanness and giving up their mother-tongue in the Yankee ‘melting-pot’. The Germans in the East were exposed to the threat of the extinction of their identity in post-Versailles Europe. They were country cousins abroad in need of support from the German state and its cultural institutions. Yet their very isolation, their position as ‘islands’ of Germanness lent them an air of purity, of being living cultural museums. To German identity-theorizing within Germany belonged a degree of self-hatred and doubt about the Germanness of Germany. In the *Volksdeutsche*, free of the corrupting influences of an artificial German state and largely rural in character, could be found preserved culture, language and the will to fight for survival. In this sense they could be seen as more German than the Germans within the political boundary of Germany, for that political boundary was itself a modern state with democratic institutions, cities, socialists, Jews, i.e. with all the ‘unnatural excrescences’ on the body social.

Kurt Schwedtke, the newly appointed Führer of the politically co-ordinated Deutscher Neuphilologenverband, described a visit to the German schools in Riga, Latvia (23 October to 2 November 1933) in which he lectured on modern pedagogical tendencies in Germany in relation to the National Socialist revolution, and described the bonds of friendship that were formed in the course of the conference between the *Reichsdeutsche* and their brothers and sisters, the ethnic Germans in Latvia:

Here on foreign soil, separated by a great distance from the motherland, lives German folk culture in the truest sense of the word. The close cultural and spiritual ties that stretch from Herder and Hamann by way of Richard Wagner to Alfred Rosenberg will ensure that we never forget the warriors of old, who rode out under the banner of the order of knights and carried forth German thought. Here on foreign soil one experiences with the greatest urgency how the Germans abroad are the beacons of light which lead to the essence of German being.

(Schwedtke 1934a: 52)

In the hour of need these Germans abroad would show the way.

These Germans were both an ideal and a model for Germans in the Reich, and the focus of intense anxiety. The ideal was that of a rural, unspoilt folk culture. But many ethnic Germans in the East lived in towns and cities, and much academic effort was expending in maximizing the German contribution in civilizing the East and in building centres of intellectual and architectural excellence. But beyond this claim to cultural superiority there were also significant German economic interests in the towns and cities of Eastern Europe. One notable example was the Polish city of Lodz, whose industry was dominated in the inter-war years by wealthy German and Jewish manufacturers. There was therefore a potential fear of being identified with the Jews as economically exploitative, rootless outsiders.

The proliferation of agencies and offices within the National Socialist bureaucracy can be exemplified by looking at the question of the Germans outside Germany, the so-called *Völkdeutsche*. In addition to the German Foreign Ministry (Auswärtiges Amt, AA), agencies such as the Party's Foreign Policy Office (the Aussenpolitisches Amt), the Dienststelle Ribbentrop, the League for Germans Abroad (Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland, VDA)¹ in Stuttgart, the Overseas Organization of the Nazi Party (AO), and the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle (VOMI), an agency of the SS, all had an interest in the various categories of Germans abroad.

The role of the Auslands-Organisation of the NSDAP was characterized by Heinz Kloss as follows:

As in the Reich, the leading organization among the German citizens living abroad is the National Socialist German Worker's Party. This party is manifest in the Overseas Organization of the Nazi Party [Auslands-Organisation der NSDAP] which was founded on 1 May 1931 (up to 17 February 1934, it was the Overseas Department . . .). This organization has been since 3 October 1933 an autonomous section of the party, under the immediate direction of the Führer's Deputy. Party members who had emigrated had earlier founded National Socialist associations in particular countries; gradually there emerged bases in all parts of the world. These grew into local branches which could be brought together within the Overseas Organization.

(1935: 21–2)

By 1935 other party organizations, such as the overseas section of the National Socialist Teachers Union (Gau Ausland des NS-Lehrerbund), had been developed (1935: 22). The AO's activities in the USA were described by Kloss as follows:

the Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP maintains a representative in New York and has a number of individual members among the German citizens residing in this country [the USA], but does not maintain a branch-organization (Landesgruppe). It was never directly concerned with naturalized immigrants and even less with their descendants.

([1937] 1980: 52)

One of the most important scholarly centres was the Deutsches Ausland-Institut (German Foreign Institute, DAI) in Stuttgart.² There were also the so-called 'research communities' (Forschungsgemeinschaften), associated with the universities. These were groups of academics with particular interests in certain geographical regions. In a 1937 report Kloss described the activities of the research communities concerned with overseas Germans as follows:

The Forschungsgemeinschaft für das ÜberseedDeutschtum is a loose federation of university and hochschul-teachers interested in Germanic developments overseas. It has no permanent seat and forms one among a number of similar federations which have been formed in the interest of research work among the German groups living in Eastern, Southeastern and Western Europe. Their common secretary is Dr Emil Meynen who is familiar with German-American problems. Their common mouthpiece is the 'Archiv für deutsche Landes- und Volksforschung.'³

([1937] 1980: 51)

The Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle (Ethnic German Liaison Office) was founded in 1936 within the NSDAP. In January 1937 Himmler made SS-Obergruppenführer Werner Lorenz its head. The organization, originally under Hitler's deputy, Rudolf Hess, had the task of ministering to the financial and political needs of Germans abroad by acting as an intermediary between the *Volksdeutsche* and institutions in Germany. Many *Volksdeutsche* did not have German citizenship and thus could not deal directly with state institutions, nor with the AO. In particular the VOMI was concerned with gaining the sympathy and support of the *Volksdeutsche* for the National Socialist cause. Gradually the VOMI achieved control of organizations such as the VDA and the Gustav-Adolf-Verein,⁴ partly through being given power over the foreign currency resources directed to Germans abroad.

In its operations the VOMI had the advantage of operating on a level at which there was no clear dividing line between Party and State. The VOMI drifted steadily towards the orbit of the SS and of Himmler both as head of the SS and as RKfV (Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums). By 1941 organizations such as the VDA and the Bund Deutscher Osten (BDO) were under the effective control of the VOMI, as was the DAI. The VOMI was particularly concerned with population transfers (e.g. in the Balkans in 1939), but the political leadership in these operations was held by the office of the chief of staff (Stabshauptamt) of the 'Reich Commissioner for Solidifying the German Folk Nation' (Himmler). Ultimately, however, the VOMI itself ended as just one department in Himmler's sprawling administrative empire.⁵

The Ahnenerbe and the *Volksdeutsche*

The ideological background to the transfers of ethnic German populations organized by the German government was described by Kloss (1941a) in his survey of the history and nature of the Germans outside the Reich (see fuller discussion, below). Kloss linked the policy to National Socialist plans to restructure the boundaries between national groups and political states. Hitler had argued that the geographical boundaries between peoples should be drawn precisely, and that this would remove at least one source of conflicts in Europe. This was essential in an age of the development of separate national identities and the 'racial idea' (1941a: 28–30).

As described by Kloss, this process of resettlement involved both the transfer of Germans from outside the Reich and their reattachment in the border areas of the newly expanded Reich (*Umsiedlung* and *Ansiedlung*). For example, Germans from the Baltic were resettled in north Wartheland and in the Reichsgau of Danzig-Westpreussen (Kloss 1941a: 29). In this way the German Reich was consolidated within its new borders by population transfers from outside, a process that Kloss compares to the compact expansion of Germans eastwards in the Middle

Ages.⁶ At the head of this work Hitler had placed Heinrich Himmler, the Reich leader of the SS and designated him on 7 October 1939 as the ‘Reich Commissioner for Solidifying the German Folk Nation’ (Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums). The loss of such centres of German culture as Riga and Bozen was painful, but these places were being exchanged from a position of strength, not weakness. As Rosenberg has put it: ‘The Baits [Baltic Germans] are losing a homeland and gaining a fatherland’. Now the boundary of the *Volk* would be the boundary of a great power; the gap between the history of the people and the history of the Reich was to be closed once again, a historical unity which the Anglo-Saxons have never managed to achieve: ‘The Reich is calling its children, scattered asunder in a period of weakness, to return’ (Kloss 1941a: 30).

One example of academic operations involving the transfer of the *Volksdeutsche* were the cultural commissions headed by Wolfram Sievers and Professor Hans Schwalm.⁷ Wolfram Sievers, the administrative director (Reichsgeschäftsführer or Reich business leader) of the Ahnenerbe, directed the cultural commission in Bozen (Bolzano), South Tyrol (1940–1).⁸ Schwalm directed the cultural commission Gottschee (1941–2). In a document dated 23 April 1941, Sievers gave the following report:⁹

The cultural action in South Tyrol which was assigned to the ‘Ancestral Inheritance’ and which is under its direction (i.e., of the Reich business leader [Sievers]) has been carried out for a year now with thirteen working groups and fifty-six men and women workers. The work is laid out with a breadth and detail such as has never been accomplished before. Things have been verified which the people themselves had said did not exist and which scholarship had assumed without being able to offer proof. Establishing this proof was now possible for many things. He named for example house types which up until now were only known to exist in Gotland or South Sweden.

The Ahnenerbe, Sievers continued, also had a role to play in newly occupied regions, and he pointed in addition to its operations in Scandinavia, France and Holland and the need for the development of a ‘science of colonization’. The Ahnenerbe followed the Wehrmacht: ‘It has happened that wherever military action is successful and completed, that the “Ancestral Inheritance” is then called in’. Dr Richard Wolfram, a folklorist from the University of Vienna, added a report on his field work in South Tyrol:

In the relict area an abundance of material was collected: customs, folk beliefs, folk dances. With one example he explained the unique fact that songs of a special quint-form previously known only in Iceland had been found in South Tyrol.

Wolfram asked how all the material collected was to be evaluated and applied. Sievers responded that there was a prohibition on the publication of such results and that only Himmler could give permission in individual cases.

The cultural commission Gottschee (Kocevje), which was active from October 1941 to June 1942, was attached to the operation to transfer population after the division of the Slovene area Draubanat between Germany and Italy. The agreement had been signed in Rome on 31 August 1941. The German population of Ostdraubanat was incorporated into the Reich, but those Germans who remained on the Italian side of the partition line were to be resettled in Germany. This population transfer affected the ethnic island of Gottschee in Unterkrain, those Germans who remained from the ‘once dominant’ German population in the provincial capital Laibach (Ljubljana), and the scattered Germans throughout Unterkrain. The numbers involved were 12,500–13,000, 1,500–2,000 and 300–500 respectively. The task of this commission was to obtain as much information as possible about the Germans who were to be resettled, and where possible to collect folk artefacts and records (pp. 2–4). However the work of the commission was hampered by many difficulties, including an unstable military situation, bureaucratic obstacles, bad weather, lack of equipment and manpower and the agitated state of many of the informants who were leaving their homes.¹⁰

The agreement stipulated that only ‘moveable’ objects and materials in private hands were to be taken. However the archives of organizations which were three-quarters German could be removed to Germany. Schwalm reported that two farmhouses had been dismantled and shipped to Germany in violation of the agreement, as well as the contents of the Gottschee museum (Heimatismuseum), the libraries of various cultural organizations and memorials to the fallen heroes of the *Volkstumskampf* (p. 3).

The commission was made up of eight sections or *Arbeitsgruppen*. These were concerned with field studies in the areas of folklore and linguistics, as well as with the photographing, filming, collection and photocopying of objects and materials. Section two for folk custom and belief was headed by Professor Richard Wolfram of Vienna University, a departmental head in the Ahnenerbe; dialectology and linguistic geography (section three) was under Dr Bruno Schweizer,¹¹ likewise a department head in the Ahnenerbe. Sections seven and eight were concerned with the photocopying of church records and archives respectively, under the supervision of Kurt Osten and Carl Fust of the Reichssippenamt. In a letter to Sievers dated 4 April 1942, Schwalm complained that Osten was sending reports directly to the Reichssippenamt. Sievers in reply (5 May 1952) urged Schwalm not to get too worked up, reminding him that the Reichssippenamt had overall charge of the operation.¹²

Gottschee was presented by Schwalm in his report as having particular value, as being a racially and culturally intact community. It was an island of Germanness (*Volksinsel*), cut off from the outside by steep mountain slopes and dense forest. This isolation from the outside world had preserved the community, protecting it from the ravages of war and economic and social hardship. This was in spite of the fact that Gottschee was entirely surrounded by Slavs (in the west, north and east, Slovenes; in the south, Croats), and had no direct link to other islands of Germanness (p. 6). Some Slovene families had moved into peripheral areas of the Gottschee, but there had been no strong migration into the area. It was a so-called 'closed German ethnic island', and one of the oldest. The area had been uninhabited until the arrival of Germans in the fourteenth century (p. 8).¹³

However in modern times the Gottschee had been threatened by emigration to the United States and a falling birth-rate, as well as a lack of territorial acquisitiveness ('Mangel an Landhunger'), and had been undergoing a process of impoverishment. The impact of Wilhelm Lampeter (born 22 January 1916) and his *völkisch* movement had been crucial in countering this decline and the American influence that had resulted from the increased contact with the United States. Many of those who had migrated to the United States had returned, bringing with them 'civilizing' i.e. negative influences (p. 20). However the Gottscheer had retained their cultural identity, their 'ancestral inheritance', their particular building styles, language and idioms, folklore, folksongs etc. either as part of a still living tradition or preserved in living memory. Many aspects of this cultural inheritance could no longer be found elsewhere in German communities, or were even undocumented in the remainder of the German world (pp. 20–1). This spirit had shown itself in the armed conflicts with the Serbs in 1941 and with the fact that nearly 100 per cent of the Germans were prepared to move, and 80 per cent of the men were willing to volunteer for the army (pp. 11–12).¹⁴

Bruno Schweizer, who was working in co-operation with Professor Wolfram, reported that the dialectological section had intended to study the Gottschee dialect by means of a comprehensive survey of all the villages, and to investigate the origins of the Gottscheer by looking at the toponymics of the area (pp. 36–9). His dialectological questionnaire was that of the *Deutscher Wortatlas* ('German Word Atlas'), and this was distributed in 160 locations. Schweizer's main conclusion was that the Gottscheer dialect was the best preserved example of traditional folk speech. There was a need to create a dictionary of Gottscheer dialect which would record those words lacking in other dialects and would situate the dialect in the overall geography of German. However no complete dialectal survey has been carried out. Folk songs and stories are particularly well preserved, and these are to an unusual degree bound up with the dialect, which deviates very considerably from High German.

The practical difficulties of carrying out research in such a situation, and the lack of trained

personnel, meant however that only ten locations had been investigated; recordings for the *Wortatlas* could be made from a few elderly teachers suggested by Lampeter.¹⁵

Schweizer's report also contained a criticism of previous studies of the Gottschee area. These works failed to convey the original language, and offer translations which are only of limited value. The original pronunciation and vocabulary needs to be recorded: 'the word as such is of the greatest importance, especially in the case of texts behind which lie hundreds of years of transmission and which come from the depths of the life of the folk soul'. The codification of the carefully preserved treasures of the Gottscheer Germans is a matter of great importance for German research and the German people (p. 38). Schweizer suggests that the Ahnenerbe set up a research post in the new area of settlement which would work on eight projects: (1) a dictionary which would pay particular attention to words which are unique to Gottschee German; (2) a handbook for the practical promotion of the Gottschee dialect ('ein Gottscheer Handbuch zur praktischen Pflege der Sprache'); (3) a dialectological handbook; (4) a collection of stories, legends and myths in their original dialect form, which, being 'undoubtedly of pre-Christian origin', would substantially enrich our knowledge of German folk belief; (5) a folk song collection; (6) a work on the folk customs and traditions of Gottschee; (7) a collection of sayings (proverbs, puzzles, rhymes); (8) a work of onomastics.

For Schweizer, the importance of the Gottschee for research lay in the autonomous unity of the Gottschee area, one which represented an intact German landscape from which no part could be removed without threatening the whole. In its very cultural particularity it had much to offer the German people, and Schweizer argued that it should not be studied in a fragmented way, by specialists working independently, but be seen as an integrated whole. Since the linguistic element was the unifying factor among the eight areas of study he had elaborated, Schweizer offered to set up and lead the research post. Given his knowledge of the related upper Italian linguistic islands, he considered himself in a good position to contribute to the question of the original homeland of the Gottscheer and an understanding of their Germaness (p. 39).

In the course of the operation in Gottschee and Laibach, Schwalm had drafted a plan for a section of the Ahnenerbe dealing with Germans outside the Reich, a *Leitstelle für volksdeutsche Forschung*. The draft is dated 17 March 1942, written in Laibach.¹⁶ This document lays out the special significance of the *Grenz- und Volksdeutschtum* for the German people. These islands of Germanness and border settlements are on the front line of the struggle both in peace and in wartime. Their racial strength and determination is put to the test much more than is the case with the Germans in the interior, and as a result it is in these areas that we can reach a special insight into the struggle for survival of the people as a whole, one that is carried on both on the individual and collective level. Hence research into these groups takes on a special significance within the study of German folk culture (p. 1). Academic research after the First World War had concentrated

on making the case for these groups faced with destruction in post-Versailles' Europe; under National Socialism this defence has become a process of renewal through the adoption of National Socialist ideas and the reawakening of latent racial forces. In this process *volksbiologische Forschung* ('folk-biological research') plays the key role (pp. 1–2).

A document dated 30 October 1942 elaborates on these plans. Himmler had acquired two roles of relevance to this issue, being both Reich Commissioner for Strengthening the German Folk Nation (Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums) and having acquired responsibility within the Party for *Volksdeutsche* affairs (Beauftragter für volksdeutsche Fragen innerhalb der Reichsleitung der NSDAP). The Ahnenerbe's section for research into the *Volksdeutsche* is envisaged as linking both of Himmler's offices to the Hauptamt für Volkstumsfragen der NSDAP. The document considers where responsibility for culture should lie, especially in the light of the operations in Tyrol and Gottschee. The question of who was the rightful heir of dissolved social and cultural organizations was also raised, with the Ahnenerbe envisaged as holding and analysing the materials collected in the course of those operations.

The academics of the National Socialist state who were concerned with the fate of the *Volksdeutschen* thus appeared in the guise of missionaries ministering to the Germans under threat. Salvation in this case meant of course the destruction of the actual communities that were being resettled, in the sense that they were being reincorporated into the Reich and thus the isolation which had preserved many of their 'unique' features was being lifted. The joyous reunion with the German state logically would involve a kind of identity-coordination, with the academics cataloguing and recording the disappearing culture. This would be done using the latest scholarly methods (respect for the autonomy of the original text and its exact linguistic transmission), as well as the latest technology (e.g. techniques of sound recording). Handbooks would be created and a version of the local dialect promoted and no doubt preserved by a society with sentimental links to the 'old home'. For once the academics had noted the special features and built their ethnographic museums, they would have no further use for the special 'culture' they were studying. Papers could be written and the matter neatly defined and its special features tagged, compared and contrasted.

The framework for Schwalm's mission was standard *Volkskunde*, with the assumption that those who are German speak German, or that their immediate ancestors did. Language, along with a dense interconnecting set of cultural practices and symbols, is the outer sign of race. Only when these cultural traces have been obliterated by assimilation need one reach to the science of race to look for indications of German ancestry.

In these operations the academics of National Socialist Germany were the moderns dealing with the primitives. They are modern professional ethnographers, critical of previous textual

methods and anxious to document and ‘preserve’ a culture under threat. Like modern ethnographers, they arrive just behind the forces of the modern state – a state which opens the way for them – catching in their febrile fantasies the last glimpse of an organic cultural whole, one to which they bid a fond farewell as they collect and catalogue their data.

The number of Germans resettled under the agreement is given by Kloss (1941a: 10) as 12,000. These Germans were resettled in the area of the Sava River, and were subsequently driven out in the *Vertreibung* of 1945.

Ironically, it was the Nazi true believer, Wilhelm Lampeter, who produced a damning indictment of the operation, in particular the organization of the resettlement. In three reports¹⁷ he sketched the history of the Gottscheer Germans, their decline in the modern industrial world of free-market capitalism and mass-production, the threat of emigration to the United States on their cultural integrity and the hope and vigour that the rise of Nazism had brought in their struggle against the twin perils of Americanization and Slavicization. Lampeter then painted a picture of the administrative chaos that greeted the Gottscheer on their arrival in the Reich, and the despair and disillusionment into which they had sunk. Many had been greeted with the question ‘Why didn’t you stay where you were?’, their pure German dialect, the admiration of Germanists everywhere, dismissed as ‘gypsy language’; the newly appointed resettlement staff (the Ansiedlungsstab) was full of reactionaries (i.e. anti-Nazis), opportunists, people with suspect heredity (i.e. mental illness in the family) and Slovenes. The final paragraph laid out the catastrophe in unambiguous terms:¹⁸

There is an urgent need for proper leadership to be appointed. This leadership has to see what the problems are and win the trust of the settlers. At the moment it has to be concluded that, after a few weeks’ residence in the Reich, the Gottscheer Germans have been entirely deprived of the very self-possession that made possible their survival over six hundred years amongst the Slovenes. All that was achieved – carried out in an exemplary fashion by the resettlement staff – was the complete destruction of what in the history of German cultural groups is undoubtedly a rare form of social organization, and the annihilation of the so very precious baggage that the Gottscheer brought with them, namely the idealism that is their commitment and their willingness to sacrifice themselves. All this has put a great strain on their faith in Germany.

The Deutsches Ausland-Institut and Heinz Kloss

Heinz Kloss¹⁹ is one of the twentieth century’s leading theorists in the area of language planning

and language rights. His first major work, on the socio-cultural politics of the Germanic language family, was published in 1929 (1929a); almost 60 years on we can find two articles by Kloss in the Walter de Gruyter handbook on sociolinguistics (1987a, b). Kloss' career shows not only academic longevity, but also a consistency of theme and approach, one which has made him influential in the sociology of language, the study of ethnicity in relation to language and the field of language rights. Kloss is primarily associated with studies of the Germanic language family as *Kultursprachen* of various kinds (1952), and for his work on linguistic minorities and ethnic politics in North America. In the 1920s and 1930s Kloss was associated with the rise of academic Yiddish studies in Germany, and for surveys of the Germanic language family from a cultural–political point of view. In his post-war writings he was a pioneering scholar in the field of language surveys, and in the study of bilingualism and multilingualism, with an special focus on North America (Kloss 1985). Kloss' notions of *Abstand* and *Ausbau* have been incorporated into the disciplinary terminology of sociolinguistics.²⁰ Running through Kloss' career is a preoccupation with the question of assimilation, and the fear that the Germans outside Germany will disappear.²¹

There is another aspect of Kloss' intellectual development that is perhaps less well known to his general academic audience, his commitment to anthroposophy and the pedagogical theories of Rudolf Steiner. In 1929 Kloss published privately a work entitled *Wort und Zahl* (1929b) which falls broadly into the tradition of anthroposophy and draws upon the work of Ernst Fuhrmann; his post-war writings include a series of works on the pedagogy and social philosophy of Rudolf Steiner (e.g. Kloss 1955, 1981, 1983).

Kloss' involvement with mother-tongue rights must be read together with his administrative activities and publications during the period of National Socialism in Germany (1933–45). Before considering Kloss' career in more detail, we should consider the nature of the organization for which he worked, the Deutsches Ausland-Institut (DAI).²²

The DAI was founded on 10 January 1917, as the Museum und Institut zur Kunde des Auslandsdeutschtums under its first director Dr Fritz Wertheimer (1884–1968), a businessman.²³ The institute was set up to liaise between Germans overseas and Germany and to promote the study of Germans abroad. Its main focus was on information gathering, on the building up of a library and the accumulation of all kinds of published and unpublished information about the world's communities of Germans.²⁴ In a report written in 1937 Kloss described some of the salient features of the DAI:

1. a library with many Americana Germanica
2. a collection of newspaper clippings chiefly from the major newspapers of Germany, containing many comments of GA [German American] developments

3. a collection of GA newspapers and magazines (perhaps the majority of them) beginning in most instances around the year 1925
4. a collection of statutes, by-laws, annual reports, etc. of GA organizations
5. a genealogical department (Hauptstelle für auslanddeutsche Sippenkunde) with many GA connections
6. a monthly magazine 'der Auslanddeutsche' with frequent reports from the U.S.
7. a considerable collection of photos from GA life
8. a museum with many GA, mostly Pennsylvania-German, items
9. a number of boarding houses in Stuttgart for Germans living abroad (visitors as well as temporary residents), which are open for all Americans of German descent who still speak German.

(Kloss [1937] 1980: 51)

The DAI was politically co-ordinated along with other German cultural institutions in 1933, with the appointment of Dr Richard Csaki (1886–1943)²⁵ as head, and the mayor of Stuttgart Dr Karl Strölin (1890–1963) as its president (McKale 1977: 55; Ritter 1976: 57–61). During the Nazi era the DAI received funding from a variety of sources, including the Foreign Ministry (AA), the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle (VOMI), the Ministry of War (Reichskriegsministerium), the Ministry of Propaganda (Ministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda), Ministry of the Interior (Reichsministerium des Inneren), Ministry of Labour (Reichsarbeitsministerium), the Ministry of Finance (Reichswirtschaftsministerium), the city of Stuttgart, (Stadtverwaltung, Stuttgart) and the Württemberg Ministry of Education and Culture (Württ. Kultusministerium). The funding from the Ministry of War was particularly in relation to the preparation of maps. The Deutsche Akademie was jointly responsible with the DAI for establishing the Arbeitsstelle für auslanddeutsche Volksforschung, and for the publication of the journal *Zeitschrift für auslanddeutsche Volksforschung* (see Kloss [1937] 1980: 51). Kloss was a member of the America section of the academy, and argued in the appendix to a travel report written in 1940 that as 'free institutes' the DAI and the DA had a common interest in co-operating. Both were faced with competition from official organizations (such as the AA) and the universities with their research collectives etc. (*Forschungsgemeinschaften*, etc.).²⁶

Kloss' visit to the United States, 1936–7

One source for understanding Kloss' 1936–7 trip to the United States and his mind-set at that time is the report he wrote for the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, which contains a proposal for a German-American research institute to be set up in the United States (Kloss [1937] 1980).

This institute would be able to co-operate with those bodies in Germany that are concerned with Germans overseas. Among those institutions the DAI, with its strong links to the United States and its research centre on overseas Germans (*Arbeitsstelle für auslanddeutsche Volksforschung*), a joint venture with the *Deutsche Akademie*, ‘holds the first place’ ([1937] 1980: 50–1). Kloss later distanced himself somewhat from the tone of the report, as reported by the editor: ‘Obtaining in the years between the two World Wars, there was a filiopietistic color to the writing, as the author himself has stated in a recent letter to me [La Vern J. Rippley], that need not be emulated today’ (1980: viii). The editor also points out that the report was reluctant to discuss negative aspects of German life in the United States, including ‘their behaviour in the anti-saloon movement, their occasional reluctance to assimilate’. We must also consider that ‘the writer in 1937 used terminology that would not be repeated by contemporary authors who have received the benefit of the Civil Rights and Feminists movements’. These ‘infelicities of the pen’ have been allowed to stand (1980: viii).

This ‘filiopietism’ took the form of an anxiety to prove that outstanding individuals in the history of the United States were in fact German, to give the lie to the accusation that the German-American element had ‘produced less outstanding personalities than Americans of other stock’ ([1937] 1980: 59). Kloss was also concerned about the ‘biological decline’ of the United States, and hoped that the rural Germans would make a contribution to maintaining the health of the population:

Thus we have, in the state of Ohio, two ethnic elements tending to offset the low birth rate of the majority: the German-Americans and the Southerners; but only the German-Americans give to their state a wholly desirable offspring. The progeny of the Southerners undoubtedly is less desirable.

Conclusions: In one of the most important states of the Union, the rural German-American element is increasing absolutely. It is also increasing its proportional strength and therefore is apt to become more and more important in the future development of the state. It is the only group of desirable citizens showing a high birth rate. In fact, it will furnish for the state of Ohio the only desirable surplus. [...] The rural German-Americans can make their priceless contribution to the future of Ohio, not because of a rapid, thoroughly artificial process of so-called Americanization, but rather because of a slow and cautious process of self-adaptation, and by retaining many of their original characteristics.

([1937] 1980: 100–1)

These original characteristics could survive over considerable periods of time, and the Americans of ‘more remote German ancestry’ should not be ignored ([1937] 1980: 223): ‘Native American painters of German descent, e.g., have often shown a predilection for the art of Germany, and the study of these and similar interrelations is particularly instructive.’

Kloss and his critics

Kloss’ work in the DAI has been studied primarily by historians of US–German relations, and seems to have remained largely unknown to academic linguists. In one such historical study, Smith (1965) looked at the role of the Kloss and the DAI in German policy towards the United States and its population of German origin. Smith makes a distinction between *Deutschtum* and Nazism, and applies it to an understanding of the academic development of the DAI. Kloss, who had been with the DAI before the coming to power of the Nazis, ‘retained his strongly academic and cultural approach to the study of Germans abroad’. Kloss’ work remained within language studies, population and migration studies, the historical background of the Germans abroad:

This is not to say that Kloss didn’t give lip service to National Socialism,²⁷ but his major concern was not so much the spreading of Nazi doctrine as it was the spreading of *Deutschtum*.

(1965: 154)

Kloss’ views are contrasted with those of Fritz Gissibl, a National Socialist activist in the United States who returned to live in Germany. Smith is quick to point out that he is not presenting *Deutschtum* as the lesser of two evils; rather he wishes to give as historically accurate a picture as possible of the DAI and the various purposes at work:

These purposes were promoted by the personnel of the DAI, and therefore what emerged as a blindness or an ignorance at times in relation to the German-American community was partially the result of opposing ideas emanating from such individuals as Kloss and Gissibl.

(1965: 154)

In his account of the evolution of the DAI, Sander Diamond makes use of a slightly different conceptual framework, arguing that *Deutschtum* became corrupted and gradually changed its meaning (1974: 47–8). Ethnology, ‘the study of the distinctive characteristics of the subdivisions

[of] mankind – their origins, speech, culture, and institutions’ – had thrived in Weimar Germany, in part as a response to the changes of political boundaries and population movements that followed the end of the First World War. These ethnologists, who included ‘former members of the Pan-German League, pseudo intellectuals, and racists’, were employed in the universities, in government and in various academic institutions:

Unfortunately for Wertheimer, who thought ethnology of secondary importance in the work of the DAI, a group of young men joined the DAI in the mid-1920’s. These men were gradually equating *Deutschtum* with the mystical qualities of the German *Volk* – an equation that would result in the brutalization of German society. The equation of *Deutschtum* with racial characteristics was not new to some segments of German society. What was new was the elevation of the study of *Deutschtum* to the academic level and its eventual evolution into a political ideology.

Diamond goes on to list those ‘young men’: Hermann Rüdiger, Otto Lohr, Gustav Moshack, Wahrhold Drascher, and Heinz Kloss:

Their unpublished and published writings reflect a change in the meaning of *Deutschtum*; the emphasis was more on *völkisch* solidarity than on culture and ethnicity. Wertheimer seems to have agreed with their views. He could not know that *Deutschtum* would become a political issue and some of these men would facilitate the DAI’s integration into the NSDAP’s administrative structure. Nor would he have imagined that they would oust him from his position as general director, claiming that a Jew could not serve the New Germany.

(Diamond 1974: 48).

McKale tells much the same story as Diamond, beginning with this assessment of the DAI before 1933:

The Institute, with its massive research facilities and library on foreign *Deutschtum* [. . .] focused its attention on cultural Germandom abroad and concerned itself with preserving the German language and way of life among foreign German communities.

(1977: 6–7)

For McKale, the intellectual output of the institute, seemingly inadvertently, led into or became congruous with National Socialist thought:

But some of the most important studies on Germanism during the 1920s were written for the Institute by writers whose emphasis on *Deutschtum* was towards völkisch solidarity among foreign Germans rather than on culture and ethnicity. Such persons, perhaps unwittingly, contributed to the later Nazi transformation of the meaning of *Deutschtum* into a racial and political concept.

(1977: 6–7)

One of the most important areas of concern was the terminology used to describe the different categories of Germans outside the Germany, and the members of the institute (ibid.) developed an ethnic vocabulary to describe the various classifications of Germans outside the Reich; these terms (*Reichsdeutsch*, *Volksdeutsch*, *Auslandsdeutsch*) were to be used extensively after 1933 by the AO and its party branches abroad, and when the National Socialists seized power, these too took on distinct racial tones.

This places the beginnings of the political study of ethnicity in 1933, juxtaposing the cultural with the political, and the ethnic with the racial. Diamond goes so far as to say that ‘Hitler’s appointment as Chancellor marked the end of the study of Germanness as a private and seemingly harmless endeavour’ (1974: 49). For Smith, the recognition of a contrast between Nazism and *Deutschtum* represents an attempt to reflect accurately the range of views found in the DAI; for Diamond and McKale *Deutschtum* was corrupted by völkisch ideology.

Kloss responded to Smith and Diamond’s books with a bitter polemic, concluding in both cases that respectable academic publishers had no business printing such slapdash and amateurish history. Kloss’ response to Smith came in a published review (Kloss 1966b); his response to Diamond exists in typescript form.²⁸ One main objection that Kloss raises in both essays is that the authors neglect the full range of sources available. Smith failed to interview those involved, and did not bother to read the printed sources from the period such as the periodicals *Jahrbuch für Sippenkunde*, *Deutschtum im Ausland und Volksforschung*, and Kloss’ publications on the United States (1937, 1940–2). The DAI’s work in relation to the United States had three basic elements: publications and press-correspondence destined for the German language press in the United States, the work of the Centre for Research into Migration and Family ties (Hauptstelle für Wanderungsforschung und Sippenkunde), and the diverse research and correspondence activities of the researches. Smith has concentrated on the third activity only (1966b: 712).

On the more substantial point concerning the relation between *Deutschtum* and National Socialism, Kloss notes that Smith equates in moral terms both the attempt to make links with fellow Germans overseas (a right, says Kloss, recognized by the majority of US sociologists and asserted by the US representative at the UN-seminar on multinational states in 1965) and Nazism.

This equation even applies for Smith to work done before 1933 (1966b: 712). Kloss accuses Smith of trying to tie him into an imagined conspiracy at the DAI to promote National Socialism in the United States. Smith's central thesis, that there was an 'American department' in the DAI headed by Moshack, with Kloss and the returned US-Führer Gissibl and W. Kappe is simply false. Gissibl was never an employee of the DAI, Moshack was head of the Auskunfts- und Vermittlerstelle until 1939 and then left the DAI, Koppe worked in the press department (1966b: 712–3).²⁹

This last point is partially contradicted by the files of the DAI, though Kloss himself is presented as being on the defensive over this matter. There are records of a meeting of the DAI America section or Amerika-Ausschuss on 3 December 1935 attended by Kloss, Csaki, Moshack, Dr Drascher and Lohr. Kloss had produced a memorandum 'Draft guidelines for America work', in which Moshack said he missed mention of support for the National Socialist struggle in the United States. The guidelines attached to the record of the meeting do include the aim of developing National Socialism among the Germans in the United States, and speak of the revival of the German ethnic islands, the setting up of links between the urban and rural Germans with the ultimate aim of creating a true folk community with National Socialist outlook. In this community the directly National Socialist post-war immigrants in the towns should be encouraged to link up with the rootedness of the American countryside and its American-born leadership. The immediate plan was (1) to produce maps and (2) carry out linguistic surveys. A network of trusted *Volksdeutsche* among German-Americans was to be set up. The urban Germans were to be drawn into the German 'language islands', and institutional links such as youth camps and country guest houses should be set up. Academic research should serve the political interests of the ethnic Germans, but there should be no attempt to directly determine the concrete organizational structures and direction. These should develop naturally out of the German-Americans themselves.³⁰

The third meeting of this group on 21 July 1938 was attended by Dr Csaki, Ratsherr Götz, Kappe, Lohr, Moshack, Scheerer and Dr Späth. Gissibl was a resident of Stuttgart and was one of the invited speakers at a DAI conference on the United States organized in February 1939.³¹

In his discussion, Kloss (c. 1975) again castigates the book under review for selectivity in dealing with sources, and for attempting to pin on the DAI's America department the aim of promoting National Socialism in the United States. Diamond is accused of concentrating on unpublished materials, and of neglecting the published primary and secondary literature and the testimony of participants (pp. 4–5). 'Fetishism of the printed word' (*Buchstabenfetischismus*) is a feature of research on National Socialism, as is the tendency to study contemporary history as if it were archaeology. Why, asks Kloss, should a letter sent by a surviving employee of the DAI be considered a more unreliable source than a letter which can be found in the DAI archives? Of course oral testimony should be treated with scepticism, but must not this scepticism be applied

to written sources, especially those that are produced under a totalitarian regime? It is an especial feature of totalitarian regimes that there is a great difference between what is written down and what actually happens (p. 5).

Kloss then proceeds to ask and answer three questions that Diamond should have considered. First, which organizations and individuals come into consideration as having promoted a specific 'ideology of the folk' (*Volkstumsideologie*)³² between 1933 and 1941? Kloss names the Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland (VD), the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle (VOMI), and the DAI, along with the poet and councillor Karl Götz (who had close links to the DAI)³³ and the journalist Colin Ross.³⁴ Second, how are these three organizations to be distinguished? Kloss gives a brief history of the VDA, and its eventual subordination to the VOMI, an agency of the SS, (along with the DAI) after the fall of its director Dr Hans Steinacher. This involved a loss of executive freedom, though the VDA did retain some autonomy. This was true in relation to policy towards the United States. The VDA, the VOMI and their competitor the AO, ran active policy towards the United States in the Third Reich. But, says Kloss, their archives and files were destroyed in the war, whereas those of the DAI survived. This had led to an overestimation of the importance of the DAI (p. 7). The DAI was primarily an organization charged with collecting materials; it had little role in planning, and even less in research. It is wrong to pretend, as Diamond does (1974: 47) that the DAI enjoyed great prestige in the Weimar period as a research centre. Most of the academic publications of the DAI were produced by scholars not attached to the institute. Further, Diamond, like Smith, had failed to study the internal structure of the DAI. For example it was only in 1936 that an academic department was created, whose influential head, H.J. Beyer, became the chief ideologue of the DAI. Diamond fails even to mention him³⁵ (p. 8). Thirdly, by means of which publications in the Reich were attempts made to influence the German Americans? Kloss again points to gaps in Diamond's scholarship, noting that he fails to mention *Deutsche Heimat in Amerika* and other publications. Diamond should have consulted the following printed sources: *Der Auslanddeutsche* (from 1939 *Deutschtum im Ausland*), *Auslanddeutsche Volksforschung* (from 1939 *Volksforschung*), *Jahrbuch für auslanddeutsche Sippenkunde*, the bibliographies published by the DAI and the publications of the Publikationsstelle headed by Kloss. Diamond would also have found interesting an anonymous memorandum entitled 'Vorschläge für die sippenkundliche Erfassung der reichsdeutschen Amerikawanderer des 19. Jahrhunderts' (1939).³⁶ Diamond fails to explain that the archives of the DAI have taken on a disproportional importance by being preserved largely intact, while others have been destroyed.³⁷

Kloss denies Diamond's assertion that the DAI and in particular Kloss, Otto Lohr and Moshack were involved in attempts to unify the German Americans by indirect cultural means (using the Carl Schurz Foundation and the *Steubengesellschaft*). Kloss claims that on his return he was dropped from his post as librarian 'for political reasons', and that this had led to a painful rift

developing with Lohr. Diamond, argues Kloss, overstates his importance (p. 11), perhaps because of his (mis-) readings of Kloss' publications. Since he could not accuse these publications of promoting National Socialist ideology, he had resorted to arguing that they tried to influence the reader by indirect means to accept National Socialism. The offending passage is a comment by Diamond on Kloss' 1937 work *Um die Einigung des Deutschamerikanertums*, which has, writes Diamond, none of the crude propaganda features of works by Colin Ross or Alfred Rosenberg:

Kloss was quite correct when he wrote that at one time the Germans represented one of the largest non-English-speaking minorities in the United States. He was also correct in stating that there had been a number of attempts to unify the German-America community in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

(1974: 70–1)

However this work needs to be understood in its intellectual and political context:

Only when his writings are viewed in the light of Nazi attempts to amalgamate American *Deutschtum* and German racial–political theory can his purpose be understood: Kloss and other specialists on America at the Institute and in other Nazified agencies were attempting to illustrate the continuity of the *Volk* in North America and to demonstrate that Germany's recent attempts to unify the progeny of the original Germans were not without precedent. In essence, Kloss was supplying the connective links between theory and politics.

In his defence Kloss quotes criticism by Otto Lohr (1937) of his work on Germans in the United States, *Um die Einigung des Deutschamerikanertums*. Lohr had pointed out that Kloss had failed to discuss Jewish and Masonic influences among German Americans.

On this topic Kloss' 1937 report to the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation contains the following 'neutral–academic' comments:

There is a strong tendency in present-day Germany to suspect all free-masons of acting in a destructive way, whether consciously or not. It certainly would be enlightening to have presented, in a factual way, the inter-relationship between Free-Masonry and the German-Americans, and to have investigated the attitude of German-American free-masons towards various issues under the aspect of their masonic affiliations. The Jewish question appears in a similar light. As stated in the foreword to the Report, the

internal history of German-speaking Jewry in America as a linguistic, cultural and racial unit, as well as a biographical evaluation of German-Jewish individuals can be left to American-Jewish historians and historical organizations. But the interrelationship between the German Jews and the German-speaking Gentiles has a wider significance and might be investigated by non-Jewish historians and sociologists also.

(1980: 78)

In reference to discussion by Diamond of an unpublished typescript (Diamond 1974: 71–2), Kloss argues that an author has the right to be judged primarily on his published work, since if we are discussing his influence abroad it is only through published works that such influence can take place (p. 13). He mentions an article on the ‘Negro question’ (Kloss 1943a) in which the basic thesis was that there was a viable, academically educated Black elite in the process of formation in the United States: ‘This ran completely counter to the then dominant viewpoint in the Third Reich’ (p. 13).

Kloss ended his review with the assertion that the publisher should withdraw Diamond’s book (p. 16), and this commentary (p. 17):

My situation at that time was that of a complicated young man with a complicated fate, in a complicated time, and I would wish that I would be given the opportunity to produce an autobiographical sketch, which would make all the apparent or real contradictions of my existence more comprehensible. But that would require the explanation of written statements, whose idiom [*Diktion*] is not easily accessible to the reader of today. It would also be to report how I was preparing in 1938–9 to emigrate to the United States at a later date, and how during the war I tried to rally resistance against the regime by means of a circulated letter, facts which SAD [Diamond] learned in part from my ‘America’ paper, but chose not to mention. Into this self-presentation would be brought the content of a book-manuscript that has remained unpublished entitled ‘Volk im Raum’³⁸ [Nation/folk and territorial space], that contains the actual rational and not-only-rational roots of my plan for an ‘America atlas’.

However during the war Kloss declared: ‘No more emigration!’ and went on to lament the loss of folkish vitality that emigration had caused over the centuries (1941a: 20).³⁹

The typescript mentioned above, entitled ‘Questions of ethnicity and race in the United States’ (‘Volkstums- und Rassenfragen der Vereinigten Staaten’)⁴⁰ includes a number of comments about race relations in the United States. In particular it contains an critique of American fascism

and an explanation of its failure to produce a properly thought-out conservative programme (p. 7); a discussion of the White North Americans' relation to the land, and an explanation of why it has not become part of their 'blood inheritance' (*Blutserbe*, p. 9); an explanation of why American Jews are promoting closer relations between the United States and Britain (Zionism and their interest in opposing National Socialist Germany); a discussion of the state-building capacities of the Indo-Europeans, in particular the Anglo-Saxons and the Germans (p. 23); a discussion of the social position and role of the Negro, in which Kloss rejects slavery as having been harmful both to Blacks and as inhuman (*menschenunwürdig*, p. 42), since it did not allow the former to develop their intellectual abilities and the latter their physical ones; the observation however that the worst objection to slavery was that it not only did not hinder racial mixing but actually promoted it (p. 31); an endorsement of the granting of certain personal and civil rights to the Negro, but criticism of the granting of any political rights; and the description of the granting of equal rights as 'untenable', and the characterization as 'catastrophic' of the attempt to rob the indigenous southern Whites of their rights and deliver the South into the hands of corrupt politicians and the domination of the Negroes, a process that was termed 'reconstruction' and a state of affairs that was much worse than the slavery it replaced (p. 31); the evocation of a truly organically graded social and racial order.

Kloss considers the question of why there was not greater anti-Semitism in the United States, and concludes that it was partly because the large immigration of Jews in the late nineteenth century coincided with waves of immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe and the Jews did not stand out from them, given that these immigrants were 'darker, more poorly dressed, less advanced culturally'. They made money disproportionately fast; this often being attributed to their adaptation to urban life, in contrast to the mainly rural farm workers and peasants from Eastern and Southern Europe. In this rapid success they were often thought of as particularly 'American', since the United States was the land of opportunity and material advancement (p. 58). These Jews, while assimilating faster than these groups linguistically (i.e. becoming bilingual and often even giving up Yiddish altogether in the first generation), were the slowest to assimilate culturally: 'the English-speaking grandchild of an Eastern European Jewish immigrant remains a Jew in terms of consciousness (*Bewusstsein*), behaviour (*Haltung*) and racial type (*Artung*)' (p. 59). The Anglo-Saxon elite still dominates the economy, since the likes of the Rockefellers, the Vanderbilts offer stiffer competition than the sluggish Eastern European peasants, but the Jews have made in-roads into light industry, and dominate in the media. They are over-represented in the universities, and are found in high numbers in professional courses such as law, business, pharmacy and dentistry. This reflects the characteristic assault by an upwardly mobile Jewish group on the dominant intellectual positions in society (p. 60). This rise to prominence of second and third generation Jews represents a 'true tragedy' for relations between the United States and

Germany, for at the very moment when in Germany an anti-Jewish movement of folkish renewal had fought its way to power the superficially assimilated East European Jews were reaching positions in society which enabled them to exercise directly and indirectly much greater influence than would have been possible in 1900 (p. 61). In spite of this and the lack of a clear leadership in the anti-Jewish forces in the United States, there was the possibility of a sudden change of direction, and the not inconsiderable possibility of an exclusion of the Jews from the national community ('eine Ausgliederung der Juden aus der Volksgemeinschaft'). This development would of course be accelerated or slowed down by the course of the war.

Kloss goes on to consider the question of whether the United States is a racial melting-pot, of whether a new race, *Homo Amerikanus*, is being formed. He cites statistics that show some drift (the cephalic index of Jews has gone from 83.0 to 81.4, that of the Italians has risen), but nonetheless he is confident that Americans of German origin will retain their own special racial features. One cannot however ignore the temperamental and emotional impact of the new country, citing Jung as authority for the notion that the land assimilates the conqueror (p. 72). To this adaptation belongs psychological sense of being American, and the adoption of English as the 'American' language.

The only group rights to be promoted in the United States are linguistic group rights (Kloss 1940: 2). While one might understand folk identity as a harmony of language, blood, community of tradition and mind set, the Anglo-Saxons (or 'Angloamericans') have only tolerated and occasionally promoted the linguistic aspect of *Volkstum*, passing over 'blood values' in silence.

The Germans in the United States play a particular role in Kloss' account, as one might expect (pp. 138–9). Kloss regards the Germans as the only truly Panamerican ethnic group (i.e. America defined as North and South America); they have entered all spheres of economic activity and display a complete spectrum of confessional loyalties and world views. In their ideological diversity they are more akin to a people (*Volk*) than an ethnic group (*Volksgruppe*). All the different German 'tribes' (*Stämme*) are represented in America; this has been unfavourable for the maintenance of the German language (p. 140). German has also declined because of a lack of a strong intellectual elite, a lack of higher schools and universities (p. 155). The quality of post-1850 immigrants has also declined; before they had been pious and undogmatic Christians; after 1850 came 'world citizenry and atheism' (p. 156).

Kloss' theme of the pan-American nature of Germans as their unique contribution to the building of the Americas is explored in a memorandum entitled 'Deutschamerikaner–Panamerikaner'.⁴¹ This document, which exists in various drafts, argues that the history of Germans in the United States has been written in a different way from the history of other overseas Germans, partly because the US Germans are the more urban. We lack a sense of their pattern of settlement and have only lots of descriptions of the achievements of individuals, rather

than an account of the Germans' 'collective organism' (*Kollektivorganismus Deutschtum*). The spread of the German language has been underestimated, as has German participation at all levels in the building of the US:

The Anglo-Saxon struggled for North America, the Spaniard for South America; however the German worked in every part and under every flag and in this way has above all won the right as a Panamerican to count himself at home in America.

In this sense German is the best 'American' language, and this should be remembered when we discuss the Germans in America. For example the New York periodical *The Interpreter* was right to say of the Pennsylvania Germans: 'It may be that they have not been "americanized" because they are Americans.'

In regard to influencing the course of political events in the United States Kloss was very much in favour of a 'softly-softly' approach. Kloss was for example a critic of Colin Ross' intellectual crudeness (see Diamond 1974: 66), and Kloss in his commentary on Diamond states that Götz, unlike Ross, was a man of integrity. Kloss' views on Ross are expounded in a two page critique of Ross' work *Unser Amerika* (1936).⁴² Ross stated that only a National Socialist revolution could save the United States, and that nevertheless the American Germans should not be made antagonistic to the state, as had happened in Poland and Czechoslovakia. Kloss' comment is that, while these two basic theses are correct, the book is more damaging than helpful to the cause it represents. In our work with the ethnic Germans in the United States we are fighting against defeatism; this book goes to other extreme and is too optimistic. However Kloss goes on to offer this prospect for the German-Americans. It may be possible to bring the de-Germanized Americans of German blood to a degree of awareness of their ethnic origins, to the extent that they intervene in United States' politics as a collectivity. There are in fact promising signs of such a development, one that Ross does not even consider. But it is no good if we go announcing to all the world that there is a movement which has as its aim the seizing of the political leadership of the leading world power outside of Europe. This will only alert potential enemies and lead them to oppose what is a very promising development.

Further comments on the 'Negro question' can be found in Kloss' 1937 Report:

The *GA* [German-American] *attitude* toward the Negro as a human being. Again and again it has been emphasized that the GAs did not like slavery. Perhaps it could be added that they did not like the Negro either. The reason why they had few slaves was partly their moral character, but they most likely did not want to have the Negro in

their immediate neighbourhood either. During the war there was much resentment among the Pennsylvania Germans against abolition (cf. Hoover, *Enemies in the Rear*). But this is an opinion which I submit not for approval, but for critical discussion.

(1980: 219–10)

Discussing H.R. Helper, the author of an anti-slavery book, Kloss wrote:

In 1859 a fund was raised to print 100,000 copies of it for free distribution, but the same man wrote, after the Civil war, several books wherein he warned his countrymen against over-rating the Negro's mental abilities. To me he seems to have reacted in a typical Teutonic way (his grandfather Heifer had immigrated into North Carolina in 1752).

Kloss' ideas about US–German relations were developed in a memorandum on the possibilities for the promotion of the 'New' Germany's world view in the United States.⁴³ Kloss argued that the Anglo-Saxons in the United States look at New Germany with incomprehension, partly because of the Jewish media, but in any case they would be unlikely to sympathize automatically. However the small man in America has often a much better attitude towards 'us'. Thus in many places there is strong anti-Semitism. We should not expect the United States to adopt our world view. There are 400,000 Jews within the former boundaries of the Reich; the United States has the same number of American Indians, four times that number Mexican *mestizos*, ten times that number of Jews by religion and thirty times the number of Negroes and Mulattos: 'Such a country must look for other solutions to the race question than Germany'. It is necessary to improve the Angloamericans' attitudes to National Socialism, to overcome the distaste with which we must reckon as long as Jews control key positions for the formation of public opinion.

Kloss' view was that Anglo-Saxons disliked abstract theories and programmes, and that the United States had a strong liberal tradition. It was therefore wise to present 'our' point of view by addressing concrete issues and problems. The US conservative movement which existed in the South was on the 'animalistic' level of lynchings and the Ku-Klux-Klan. The need is for a movement which reflects the disciplined structuring will of the Germanic peoples. To this end Kloss proposed a series of publications to inform US public opinion, with the aim of showing the Anglo-Saxons in concrete terms the historical effectiveness of conservative–organic folkish order (*Volksordnung*).

In a typescript review of Karl-Heinz Pfeffer's *Die angelsächsische neue Welt und Europa* (1941),⁴⁴ Kloss expressed his agreement with Pfeffer's diagnosis of the failure of fascism in the Anglo-Saxon countries. Pfeffer's argument was that there had been a chance of building a

Volksordnung based on the Germanic ‘free peasantry’ or yeoman (*Freibauerntum*), but this chance had been missed through the distortions of capitalism.⁴⁵ However Kloss took issue with Pfeffer’s description of the position of Jews in New York. Pfeffer had described the Jews as being responsible for the exploitation of the textile workers. Kloss pointed out that the workers themselves were also Eastern European Jews (p. 6):

It does no harm to our anti-Jewish position to point out that the exploited men and women textile workers are mainly Jews; the Eastern European Jewish problem (*Ostjudenproblem*) in the United States does not consist in there being a lack of Jewish immigrant manual workers, but in the increasing tendency of the second and third generations to turn away from manual labour.

Kloss also chided Pfeffer for neglecting the small-hold farmers of the southern USA (p. 11), saying that this group was often presented in a negative way. In fact it has a high birth rate and great biological vitality. While there are small areas of degeneration, at bottom this group represents thoroughly healthy mountain peasant stock (‘ein kerngesundes Bergbauerntum’).

In an undated typescript entitled ‘On the nature of the linguistic folk’ (‘Vom Wesen des Sprachvolkes’),⁴⁶ Kloss examined the assumption that the notion of *Volk* could be equated with *Sprachvolk*, and that in turn the notion of *Sprachvolk* can be equated with ‘linguistic community’ (*Sprachgemeinschaft*). Kloss defines *Sprachvolk* as a sociological structure or a group personality, whereas *Sprachgemeinschaft* is as a purely statistical entity. Traditionally it had been assumed that we can equate ‘mother-tongue’ with the notion of *Sprachvolk* and that this in turn equalled *Volk*. Thus the Irish have until recently been called ‘English’ on the language maps of Europe. This assumption has been challenged on the grounds that a language could only produce a community when that language was spoken by members of the same racial group. Thus in the United States the Negroes speak English, but are not part of the Anglo-American people (*angelamerikanisches Volkstum*). In the past few years the Jews of Europe have been excluded from most of the Western European peoples, though these Jews speak the national languages of Europe. In Eastern Europe they are mainly part of a linguistically distinct linguistic group (p. 2).

Kloss pointed to the case of Ireland to illustrate his view of the relation between language and ethnic–national identity. In Ireland the language had declined while the national sense of identity was on the rise. This does not however prove the irrelevance of language to national identity, for there are proposals for the re-Celticization of English-speaking Ireland. However the Irish do not overestimate the importance of language to the extent that they say that whoever speaks English cannot be Irish; nor do they underestimate it to the point that they regard it as a matter of

indifference which language is spoken. Instead, in order to draw a dividing line between them and other peoples, they replace membership of the linguistic community (the statistical notion, *Sprachgemeinschaft*) with identification with, a commitment to, the linguistic community (*Bekenntnis*). This yields a dynamic and progressive notion of identity, not a statistical one (p. 4). Given the right political conditions this linguistic consciousness can be realized in a gradual return to the original language. The Germans of North Schleswig now under the rule of the German Reich and who speak a Danish dialect will no doubt in the course of time return naturally and painlessly to 'our' linguistic community, just like their close blood relations in Kärnten.⁴⁷ In the case of Scotland, we have one *Sprachvolk* with two special languages: Gaelic and Low Scots (p. 5). We can see from cases like that of the Bretons that the statistical approach has no particular value in defining the dividing line between peoples; what is crucial is will (*Wille*) and attitude (*Haltung*).

This paper also contained some vague and inconclusive remarks on race. Kloss suggested that at one time the vocabulary of a language may have stood in a particular relation to a certain race. However this was something he could not answer now, and in any case such relationships no longer held. There are Germanic languages such as Yiddish, which is spoken by Jews. We can however find the traces of *Volk* and race in syntax, in intonation and to some extent in the grammar and phonology.

Kloss also discussed the question of rank-ordering of linguistic systems. *Idiome* have the right to be called languages; the term *Nebensprachen* is 'value free' (p. 14). However the politics of language should not be carried out in a vacuum; peoples (*Völker*) as blood-bound organisms provide the ultimate guide lines for what is possible and defensible in the area of the politics of language. There are various levels of awareness of a *Sprachvolk* in relation to writing, race, territory (p. 16). There is also the question of communities of creed, such as the Bosnian Moslems. There are however important linguistic elements to this kind of communal identity, not least in the existence of a unified sacred language (*Kultsprache*). Creed and language are more closely related than we tend to think (p. 23).

German brothers at the gates of the Reich

In his 1935 work *Fremdenniederlassungen – Streudeutschtum*, Kloss looked at one particular category of Germans outside the Reich, the *Fremdenniederlassungen* ('expatriates'). These were communities of ethnic Germans, usually involved in trade and business, who at some future point intended to return to the Reich, albeit perhaps only for retirement. They retained their German citizenship and their identification with Germany was something they passed on to their children. These groups did not construct their own independent areas of settlement, except for the fact that they might perhaps occupy a particular part of a town. Kloss' concern with these groups is part

of a wider concern with the vulnerability to assimilation of Germans overseas; the more scattered and isolated the communities, the less their ability to resist assimilation. Kloss reports a considerable loss of Germans among the expatriates and those living in isolated and scattered communities (*Streudeutschtum*), particularly among those Germans who are migrating westwards within Europe: ‘they are exposed to the dangers of deGermanization, and some have already succumbed’ (Kloss 1935: 53).

The Auslands-Organisation was praised by Kloss in his *Brüder vor den Toren des Reiches* as a firm source of support for German citizens overseas, including German merchant seamen (Kloss 1941a: 14). The fate of the *Volksdeutsche* was the central preoccupation of this work, which was published in a series of ‘national–political’ guides to particular areas of intellectual interest, each informing the reading public about the National Socialist view of a particular topic.⁴⁸ This work defined the key terms with regard to the Germans outside Germany, and gave statistics for different parts of the world. Kloss also gave figures about the transformation of *Volksdeutsche* into *Reichsdeutsche* by the expansion of the boundaries of the Reich and resettlement programmes such as those in Gottschee and Tyrol: as of 1 April 1942, 580,000 ethnic Germans had been brought back into the Reich (1941a: 10). It also gave a survey of the history and achievements of the *Volksdeutsche*, and their part in the idea of a ‘Greater Germany’ (*Grossdeutscher Gedanke*).

The terminology of discussions of Germans abroad is – in this case as in many – ideologically loaded. Kloss begins with the concept of *Auslandsdeutsche* for Germans citizens outside the Reich. This term was introduced into official terminology in 1938, and was meant to express that the prime loyalty of Germans outside Germany was not to the states in which they lived, but to their ‘homeland’. Of the twenty million Germans living outside the Reich on 1 September 1939, nineteen million did not possess German citizenship. These Germans are generally referred to by ‘us’ as *Volksdeutsche*: ‘in order to express the fact that, although they are not citizens of the Reich, they – no less than the Germans in the Reich and German citizens outside the Reich – belong to the great German people’ (Kloss 1941a: 3). These *Volksdeutsche* regard the countries in which they reside, in particular the regions in which they live, as their second home. Some refer to Germany as their ‘eternal motherland’, and the state in which they reside they call their ‘fatherland’. In some cases they feel obliged to refer to their fatherland in this way: other groups feel a genuine attachment to their adopted country. *Auslandsdeutsche* and *Volksdeutsche* together can be termed ‘Germans abroad’ (*Das Deutschtum im Ausland*) or ‘Outside Germans’ (*Aussendeutschtum*).

Kloss argues that the *Volkstum* of Germans living under ‘foreign peoples’ is under serious threat, and that in order to protect their identity and language (*Art und Sprache*) they must consolidate themselves in a ‘community of the will’ (*Willensgemeinschaft*). *Volksdeutsche* such as these, who are living within the same state boundary and under the same official language, are

termed a *Volksgruppe* (Kloss rejects the term ‘minority’ as carrying pejorative overtones within any formally democratic system). Given that state boundaries have altered so much in recent years, these *Volksgruppen* are of comparatively recent origin. Greater historical depth is a feature of the *Gaugruppe*, those Germans who frequently have a shared settlement history and who originate from the same part of Germany. These communities have become in many cases new branches of the German people (*Neustämme*). Thus Kloss distinguishes between the *Volksgruppe* which involves community ties and organization, and *Stammestum* which involves shared parentage and is an organism (Kloss 1941a: 4). Kloss then elaborates the distinction between ‘borderland Germans’ (*Grenzlanddeutsche*) and ‘island Germans’ (*Inseldeutsche*). The former live in areas that are in contact with the central German-speaking area; the latter live in villages or towns surrounded by foreign peoples. These islands are often termed ‘ethnic islands’ (*Volksinseln*) or ‘linguistic islands’ (*Sprachinseln*). These Germans are of course in very different positions. The borderland Germans could be brought directly under the sovereignty of the Reich, something which has happened to a large extent in recent years (1941a: 5): ‘Today there are unreincorporated borderland groups only in Denmark (Northern Schleswig), Hungary (Ödenburg) and the Principality of Liechtenstein’. In addition to the *Inseldeutsche*, there are also numerous pockets of *Volksdeutsche* who live in scattered locations in which they are a minority.

Underlying this survey of the different categories of Germans is however a basic unity, what Kloss terms the *volksdeutscher, grossdeutscher, gesamtdeutscher* or *weltdeutscher Gedanke*. This involves a striving for a transcendent unity to the Germans throughout the world, whatever state they live in: ‘a community of a higher kind’ (1941a: 8). Kloss sketches the relationship of the *Volksdeutsche* to this greater German unity in the following way:

This idea [of a greater German unity] is intended to awaken the consciousness of the ethnic Germans that they owe their achieving dynamism to the German blood heritage, that they must remain faithful to their kind [*Art*], if they do not want to lose their highest values, that they should not repudiate their old homeland, least of all in a time in which they can contribute to every single German, regardless of their membership of particular states, absolutely new currents of power and experience. The new path that the German is following is open to the Germans outside the Reich as well. This conception of the *Volksdeutsche* is intended to bring to the attention and into the conscience of the Germans of the Reich the fact that beyond the present boundary of the Reich, and even beyond any future conceivable boundary, there live millions of people who are of our blood, who speak our language, who share our way of looking at things and getting to grips with things, who are in the thrall of our world view, who look

up to the Führer as we do, who have achieved great things for the glory of the German name and who in this new era are willing to strive to achieve even greater things, who however at the same time are labouring under conditions much more difficult than we in the Reich, under thousand times greater foreign cultural influences: they are exposed to threats or oppression, lies or allurements, and are thus in need of our active support.

(1941a: 8)

The *Anschluss* with the Ostmark (Austria) means that the idea of a greater Germany (§ 1 of the programme of the NSDAP) is no longer a hope for the future, but a reality. Since 1938 further areas of German settlement have been won back, and *Volksdeutsche* from other areas resettled in the Reich (1941a: 9).

Kloss' view of Germanic–German history is of the expansion of some elements (especially the West Germanic peoples) and the loss of others (especially the eastern Germans). In the course of the Middle Ages the Germans remained a migrant people (*Wandervolk*), but not a nomadic one. Unlike nomads they struck roots in the soil, and built villages and towns. The migration of the Germans took the form of an expansive movement, particularly towards the east where their cultural superiority in relation to the local people was at its greatest (1941a: 11). Almost all the early towns of Poland and Hungary were founded by Germans, and these enjoyed initially a substantial amount of autonomy. Parts of these settlements resulted in the Germanizing (*Eindeutschung*) of the land; in the Baltic and other places the Germans formed a ruling elite. The Baltic Germans and the Saxons of Siebenburgen were products of a period when the spread of Germanness was also characterized by the drive to create state-political units (*staatliche Impulse*). The achievements of the Germans are many and diverse, both in Eastern Europe and the Americas. They have made pioneering contributions in agriculture, engineering, the sciences and culture. Kloss lists Germans or German descendants who were cultural innovators in Poland and Polish culture. They have served in foreign armies (where they sometimes found themselves opposing the Reich, which itself had armies with substantial numbers of non-Germans).

Kloss divides the various historical layers of *Volksdeutsche* into three main groupings: the settlements that date from the Middle Ages (including Siebenburgen, the Baltics, Zips and Gottschee), the new European *Volksdeutschtum* formed out of eighteenth and nineteenth century migration, and the overseas Germans (*Überseedeschtum*) that was formed chiefly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (though Kloss earlier had characterized the year 1683, with the defeat of the Turks at the gates of Vienna and founding of 'Germantown' in Pennsylvania as a significant date in the German settlement history, 1941a: 13). The first stage had a political or state-building dimension; the latter two (with the exception of Southwest Africa) did not (1941a: 15). These

two later layers were thus vulnerable to assimilation, particularly through social mobility into the upper class. Thus these *Volksgruppen* were continually robbed of their most vital elements. Only the combined effects of the World War and the National Socialist revolution (*Umbruch*) have definitively awakened these groups and united them with the other older layer of *Volksdeutsche*. However the Germans overseas have yet to find a similar maturity of the folkish will, and it is not certain that they all will find the will to put down folkish roots and survive (1941a: 15).

The Germans have been a bulwark of Western culture, in the front line of the European races (1941a: 17) against the eastern orthodox church, and the Asians hordes, serving on what Gunther Ipsen has called the 'Turkotatar front'.⁴⁹ Overseas they have served on the racial front against the coloured races; their settlements were on the so-called frontier (with the Amerindians) in North and South America. Just as they are the only true 'Panamericans', so they are the only group which can be found all along the 'Turkotatar' front:

Of all the main bearers of the white expansion overseas, the Anglo-Saxons, the Spanish, the Portuguese and the French, none are represented, as we are, in Eastern Europe, and none in *all* the main territories overseas, in north and south America, Africa and Australia. We are the only people in the world which commits compact settlements of its people to every front of the struggle of the West. We are thus entitled to characterize our German settlers [*Volksgruppen*] as the omnipresent folk troops [*Volkstruppen*] of the white race, as its working soldiers.

(1941a: 18)

There is in fact something unusual or 'unhealthy' about the German folk instinct. For while some groups only have small ambitions to expand in their immediate area, others have made world history and transformed its expansion as a people into its expansion as a state. The Germans took neither of these paths. This can be explained by the fact that at the time when the *Volksdeutschtum* was being created, the German Reich was in political decline. The vitality of the people (*Volkskraft*) did not decline to the same extent as the power of the Reich. The formation and achievements of the *Volksdeutschtum* reflects the fate of a great people to whom it was granted to become a political great power: 'In Germany itself the German people was left without space; outside in the wide world however it was a people without a Reich.'⁵⁰

Unlike the Anglo-Saxons who do not lose their identity in foreign lands, many of Germans abroad have assimilated. What we call *Volksdeutschtum* is in fact *Restdeutschtum*, the remains of a historical process of selection (1941a: 19–20). It might be thought that this process would have left a more vibrant identity behind it, and that it would have been a strengthening process; but

Kloss notes that many of the best generals in opposing armies have had German names, and that the Germans have given much of their talent to other nations. But a conscious process of selection is being carried out in the transfer to the Reich of certain communities of *Volksdeutsche*, a process that complements the natural process of selection that has taken place historically among the *Volksdeutsche*. The key for Kloss has been the lack of a central political will, one that could harness the enormous cultural–spiritual and biological (group-bodily) strength of the German people. In the Weimar period there was a search for new lands for German settlement to deal with our lack of land (*Raumnot*). Now that the German Reich has renewed its connection to that greatest period of its known history, the high Middle Ages, there can be no question of encouraging the formation of *Volksdeutsche* settlements in foreign lands (1941a: 21).

The commitment to the *Volksdeutsche* however should transcend self-interest, and is ultimately a matter of brotherly love and honour (1941a: 21). In spite of its lack of geographical unity, the *Volksdeutsche* folk body has a biological and spiritual unity, one no less real – although less evident and complete – than that of the German fatherland in middle Europe of which Kleist spoke (1941a: 21).

The preserved folk culture of the *Volksdeutsche* is also part of the original culture, one that equips the *Volksdeutsche* in their struggle for existence (1941a: 22). In their biological strength and fertility many *Volksdeutsche* communities are better off than the Germans of the Reich; their life under external pressure has made them less individualistic and self-serving. They would never have adopted the slogan of ‘art for art’s sake’ (1941a: 22); they are pioneers and conquerors of the wilderness and of other peoples, in their fight against whom they developed new techniques of war (Kloss gives Daniel Boone as an example). They were in peacetime models of justice and distance in living alongside other peoples, there were few marriages with foreign races: ‘Although there are many more Jews in Eastern Europe than in the Reich, mixed German–Jewish marriages were and are practically unknown’. In America and Africa the Germans understood much better than the Anglo-Saxons to keep their distance from the Negro, and their opposition to the brutal Anglo-Saxon institution of slavery as much out of the desire for separateness as out of moral repulsion (1941a: 23).

Through the *Volksdeutsche* the German language and culture has expanded its horizons (1941a: 24). Kloss notes that the *Volksdeutsche*, with their knowledge of the national languages of Eastern Europe, are in a good position to take over as representatives of German-based companies. These jobs were previously in foreign hands, often Jewish ones (1941a: 25). Soldiers in the First World War had rediscovered their brothers in the east (1941a: 25). The Germans of Austria, in contrast to the class-conscious Germans of the Reich, discovered that group solidarity was more important than international and super-national ideologies. They have earned the respect of the populations of the countries in which they live, and won respect therefore for Germany. They have been a

conduit for German goods into countries where otherwise the competition would have been too strong (e.g. South America).

An early indicator of the movement of National Socialism can be found in the decision by Germans in the Sudetenland to protect their rights, after having seen their working-class comrades follow their own national interest rather than inter-group solidarity (1941a: 25–6). This led to the founding of the Deutsche Arbeiter Partei in 1904, which took the term ‘national socialist’ into its designation as early as 1918, i.e. several years before the foundation of the NSDAP. This party was suppressed by the Czechoslovakian government in 1933.

However the NSDAP was itself a separate development, one which took in these older movements. But it is no coincidence that Hitler himself was an Austrian. The National Socialists in the Sudetenland and Austria later willingly submitted themselves to the leadership of the NSDAP, as did other groupings of German nationalists among the *Volksdeutsche*. As a result of this commitment to National Socialism the life instinct and the birth-rate has risen among the *Volksdeutsche* as it has in the Reich. It is also significant that the movements to protect the German people arose first in Austria. A society for the protection of vulnerable German groups was set up in 1880; this was the model for the Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland (VDA), which was founded as the Allgemeiner Schulverein in 1881.

The National Socialist leadership has put right the weakness of the German state in the inter-war years in relation to the *Volksdeutsche*. Indeed, nothing could be more natural, given that Hitler was born in Austria and came into the world as a *Volksdeutscher*, and Rosenberg was born in the Baltic and only became a German citizen as an adult. This supportive policy towards the *Volksdeutsche* was proclaimed by the Minister for the Interior Frick in Gleiwitz on 26 November 1937.

Kloss criticized the rights that had been granted to minorities as coming out of an internationalist ideology (linked to the founding of the League of Nations) and as concentrating on the individual. In both respects National Socialism brought about a radical change of direction, for its chief aim is the protection of the community (*Gemeinschaft*), of the group as a whole. The protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia granted to a foreign people a high degree of self-rule, and a Breton newspaper published a French translation of the constitution of the protectorate where the words Bohemia and Moravia were replaced by Brittany. This was to show the French press how many more rights the Czechs possessed in the Reich than the Bretons in France (1941a: 27). A similar form of group ethnic rights have been developed for the Germans in Slovakia and Croatia, and a treaty signed in Vienna on 30 August 1940 has assured the Germans of Hungary certain rights. National Socialism is based on respect for the rights of other peoples, as Hitler has made clear:

The National Socialist programme is based on a rejection of forced assimilation; in as much as we cling with boundless love and loyalty to our own identity as a people, in this spirit we also respect the national rights of other peoples, and wish from the bottom of our hearts to live with them in peace and friendship: *We thus do not recognize the concept of Germanization.* [. . .] Nor is it our wish or *our* intention to deprive foreign peoples of their identity as a people or their language or culture, and force them to adopt a foreign, German culture.

(speeches of 17 May 1933, and 21 May 1935,
quoted in Kloss 1941a: 27)

While many *Volksdeutsche* are returning to the Reich, there will still be millions of Germans who remain outside our borders. This will require us to undertake educational work within the Reich, to inform its citizens of the transnational folk community of which they are a part. Remember the example of the Führer, who did not acquire German citizenship until 1932 and welcome the visiting *Volksdeutsche* as a comrade in arms. We must make allowances for any lack of certain kinds of education and knowledge, and for the fact that they have been subjected to strong foreign influences. They must be made to feel that we in the powerful Greater German Reich are proud of these sons of our people, through whom we were a world people, in a time in which it was not granted to us to be a world power. We had the political weakness; they the folkish strength. Many will make their way back to the Reich, but those who do not return physically, must be encouraged to return spiritually (Kloss 1941a: 31).

Kloss as ‘politically unreliable’ and an ‘opponent’ of National Socialism

What sense can we make of Kloss’ biography and his claims to have been an opponent of National Socialism? Kloss’ autobiographical entry in the 1955 *Wer ist wer?*, written while he was an *Abteilungsleiter* at the DAI’s post-war successor institution, the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart, reads as follows:

Promot. 1939 Innsbruck – 1927–45 Wiss.l. Assist. u. Abt.sleit. (1932) Dt. Ausl.sinst., Stuttgart, 1940–1 (Verbot wegen polit. Unzuverlässigk.) Vorles. üb. Nationalitätenkd. Univ. Tübingen, 1941–3 Leit. Publikationsst. AA Stuttgart/Hamburg, [. . .]; Buch: Wort u. Zahl, 1936 v. d. Gestapo beschlagn. u. verbrannt.

According to this brief summary, Kloss thus joined the DAI in 1927 as an Assistent; he became a department head in 1932. He held lectures at the University of Tübingen in the academic year 1941–2 before being dismissed on grounds of political unreliability, and copies of a book *Wort und Zahl* had been destroyed by the Gestapo in 1936. However these details are absent from his entry in *Who's who in Germany?* (1964), and from other accounts of Kloss' career, including those by Kloss himself (1966b).⁵¹

A fuller reconstruction of Kloss' career up to 1945, incorporating a variety of sources,⁵² looks as follows (the dates for the termination of Kloss' various administrative activities could be considered to be either February 1943 – the date of his induction into the army – or 1945):

1922	Abitur, Naumburg
1926	Diplomvolkswirt, Halle
1927–32	Assistent, DAI
1929	Private publication in Stuttgart of <i>Wort und Zahl</i>
1930–1	Visit to USA (approx. 9 months)
1932–6	Department Head, DAI
1932–6	DAI librarian
1936–7	Visit to USA (approx. 15 months), funded by the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation in Philadelphia
1938–45	Head of the Arbeitsstelle für Volksforschung
1939	Promotion (Dr rer. pol.), University of Innsbruck
1939	Planned visit in the early part of the year to the United States cancelled ⁵³
1940	Member of NSDAP
1940–1	Information gathering section (Nachrichtenstelle) of the DAI and editor of the <i>Aussendeutscher Wochenspiegel</i>
1940–1	Lectures on nationality questions in Western Europe and the United States, the University of Tübingen.
1941(March)	Visit to Cracow
1941–4	Editor of <i>Volksforschung</i> , volume 5 to volume 8.
1941–5	Head of the Publikationsstelle Hamburg–Stuttgart
1943	Visit to Paris cancelled due to call-up from the Wehrmacht. ⁵⁴
1943–5(?)	Military service as ambulance driver in France and Italy (<i>Gefreiter</i>)

‘Dismissal’ from the University of Tübingen

The claim that Kloss was dismissed from his lecturing position at the University of Tübingen

because of political unreliability is hard to square with a letter he wrote to the Dean, Professor Weber, dated 10 February 1941. This letter reports that there was an audience of one in his lecture on the United States on 7 February, and only two students attended his lecture on Western Europe. Given this, Kloss stated that he had definitively cancelled the lectures on Western Europe and would like to do the same for the series on the United States: war conditions were, wrote Kloss, apparently not the most conducive for lectures on this topic. Kloss ended the letter by saying that he hoped to discuss the matter during his forthcoming visit to Tübingen with Dr Csaki on Wednesday, 12 February.⁵⁵ The links between the University of Tübingen and the DAI were close, witness the series of lectures held at the Technische Hochschule, Stuttgart by personnel of the DAI and University between May and June 1942. The lecturers included Professor Weber ('The British World Empire', 'Das Britische Weltreich'), Dr Csaki ('Central Europe – New Europe?' 'Mitteleuropa – neues Europa') and Kloss ('Nordamerika'). Nonetheless, one should bear in mind that the prospect of the entry of the United States into the war⁵⁶ rendered the whole topic of the United States increasingly politically sensitive. In mid-1940 the Foreign Ministry asked the DAI to withdraw from circulation a document prepared by Kloss entitled 'Vorschläge für die sippenkundliche Erfassung der reichsdeutschen Amerikawanderer des 19. Jahrhunderts'.⁵⁷ In a letter to Dr Karl Braunias (*Oberregierungsrat*, Berlin) dated 16 June 1941, commenting on a draft review Braunias had sent Kloss of *Das Volksgruppenrecht* (vol. 1, 1940) Kloss states that he stands by his praise for the ethnic policies of the United States ('die amerikanische Volksgruppenpolitik'), but Braunias will not be doing him any favours by drawing attention to it at the moment.⁵⁸

Membership of the Nazi Party

The evidence for Kloss having joined the Nazi party comes from a letter he wrote to Hermann Rüdiger dated 16 December 1940.⁵⁹ This letter concerned Kloss' assumption of the editorship of *Volksforschung* and his need to register with the Reich Press Chamber. The letter informs Rüdiger, the current registered editor, that he will have to supply a letter stating why Kloss should take over the editorship. Kloss asks Rüdiger to mention in this context the key word *Nationalitätenkunde*, since he intends to move the journal in a more general direction, i.e. away from a concentration on *Volksdeutschtum* to look at ethnic and nationality questions throughout the world. Given his wide range of his publications, Kloss thinks that Rüdiger will be able to say that he is suitably qualified. The letter concludes: 'Only in this connection do I allow myself to mention in addition that I have been a party member for some time now.'⁶⁰ Rüdiger was himself a party member.⁶¹

Kloss' role at the DAI – information gathering and scholarly intelligence

Kloss' role in information gathering and as an official and scholarly source of information was considerable. It included gathering all kinds of information and lists of Germans abroad, co-ordinating with German cultural organizations outside Germany (in Kloss' case particularly in the United States), studying the evolution and place within American society of German immigrants and evaluating ethnic groups in the United States according to their societal role, biological vitality and racial characteristics. Kloss had contacts among National Socialist sympathizers in the United States (e.g. with the Philadelphia branch (Gau Ost, Ortsgruppe Philadelphia)⁶² of the Amerikadeutscher Volksbund (the American National Socialist Organization); the cultivation of such contacts who could be useful to 'us' was a key element of his role as cultural bureaucrat.⁶³

In general Kloss gathered and supplied information on a wide range of topics, corresponding with interested scholars and official agencies throughout the Reich and in France, Denmark, Norway, Holland, Flanders and Eastern Europe. At various points in his correspondence we can find him writing to the statistical office of the ministry of finance in Paris on questions of naturalization, e.g. marriages with foreigners by French citizens, numbers of children naturalized or 'reintegrated' as French, as well as about the numbers of Germans, Austrians and Swiss in the three departments of Algeria;⁶⁴ in correspondence with G. von Tevenar of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Keltische Studien about Breton language periodicals, and about whether the English speakers in Wales are English immigrants or Welsh.⁶⁵

Kloss had access to a wide range of newspaper and other written reports from Slovakia, including material on the Deutsche Partei, the Slovakian counterpart to the NSDAP, information on the expropriation and expulsion of the Jews and Gypsies.⁶⁶ On 23 March 1942 Kloss wrote to Professor Helmut Glasenapp in Königsberg asking him if he knew of someone with the expertise to produce a work on the relationship between religious, linguistic and if possible racial categories in British India, and a confidential handbook based on the last census;⁶⁷ on 10 October 1942 he wrote to Professor Quelle in Berlin-Zehlendorf asking for information about the Germans in Mexico as part of a general inquiry into German ethnic and racial identity around the world, explaining that he was gathering information on the racial composition (*Blutbestand*) of overseas German populations. He also expressed an interest in the proportion of German blood in the population as a whole, including the de-Germanized descendants of German immigrants.⁶⁸

Kloss' interests thus were extremely wide, running even to anti-Semitic tracts produced by the Terramare Office in Berlin.⁶⁹ His interest in German identity overseas led to an interest in questions of nationality and ethnic identity in general. It turned out that one could not consider the fate of Germans in particular countries without looking at the other ethnic groups and the

policies of the state. Kloss' most important academic function was his editorship of *Volksforschung*, published four times a year in conjunction with the Deutsche Akademie. Kloss succeeded Rüdiger as its editor at the end of 1940 when the latter was called up for military service. In a letter to Rüdiger dated 16 December 1940, Kloss announced his intention to broaden the subject matter from German matters to question of nationality in general, putting this into practice from volume 5 onwards.⁷⁰

As part of the Nachrichten section of the DAI (head, 1939–41?), Kloss was privy to confidential information provided by the Berlin office of the DAI (Dr Kruse) and sought intelligence in particular about the General Gouvernement. He was involved in the production of a weekly briefing magazine with restricted circulation, the *Aussendeutscher Wochenspiegel*.⁷¹ Kloss was also consulted or sought information from other organizations about the political and ideological leanings, background and racial identity of prominent persons overseas. As an example of Kloss' role as a scholarly resource, one could cite a letter from Leo Weisgerber (dated 20 January 1941) asking for a number of the *Aussendeutscher Wochenspiegel* which deals with nationality issues in Great Britain and Ireland (Weisgerber's book appeared in 1941 and was entitled *Die keltischen Völker im Umkreis von England*).⁷² Weisgerber reports that he is leaving in ten days (presumably for Brittany, see Chapter 5).

A special concern of Kloss seems to have been the Jews in the General Gouvernement in the former Poland. A memo to Kloss from Kruse dated 1 January 1940, informed him that, contrary to a report by the Ministry of Propaganda, compulsory work (*Arbeitsdienstpflicht*) was to be introduced for Jews aged 18 and over, not 12 as had been reported. This applied in the first instance to males; women were to be put to work later. During 1940 Kloss directed a series of questions to Kruse in Berlin about a range of topics, including an inquiry (13 July 1940) about the 'Jewish question' in the General Gouvernement. Kloss asked if the concentration of the Jews of the General Gouvernement in Lublin has made any progress, and whether there was any prospect of retraining Jews in agricultural or craft skills. Kruse replied that there was not at present much to say about the concentration of the Jews in the district of Lublin, since Jews were being sent literally everywhere where there was room to accommodate them. He had no news of agricultural or craft schools for Jews. However, a decree requiring Jews to work had led to Jewish craftsmen being employed and they were carrying out this forced labour in work houses.⁷³ Kloss also produced a short report on this matter on his return from Cracow in 1941 (the visit was from 20 March to 31 March, 1941). The report was entitled 'The Jewish question in the General Gouvernement (Results of a discussion with the specialist on Jewish research in the Institute for German Work in the East, Mr. J. Sommerfeldt)'.⁷⁴ The report reads as follows:

Contrary to prevailing opinion in the Reich there is at present no clear Jewish policy being followed in the General Gouvernement. For the time being the handling of the matter is restricted to purely police measures, especially as regards the question of living quarters, and even here different districts are being managed in quite different ways. For example, while in the district of Warsaw the aim has been made to transplant the Jews of the small towns into the city of Warsaw, in the district of Cracow the Jews of the urban centre, who have shrunk in number from 60,000 to 25,000 heads, have been in the main forced out into the outlying villages and small towns. The remaining Jews in Cracow have been collected in a ghetto; while in Cracow this is merely a residential centre, and the Jews can continue to work in their old places of employment in other parts of the town, the Jews of Warsaw are completely confined to the ghetto.

The Jews are allowed to set up elementary schools, but the extent to which that is happening was not known to Herr Sommerfeldt, nor which medium of instruction was being used. Vocational and technical schools and retraining courses had not been set up as planned. Indeed he intended to produce a memorandum arguing that the resettlement (*Aussiedlung*) of the Jews be systematically prepared by means of resettlement courses and technical colleges. He would suggest not Polish but Yiddish as the medium of instruction; it was in our interests that the Jews feel themselves to be in every respect a separate people and that they did not rely linguistically on any other people. These days the most wild and contradictory rumours are current among the police and administrative authorities, saying that shortly all Jews will be shot or that they will all go to Alaska.

(Report from Kloss' 1941 trip)

This defender of Jewish language rights, Josef Sommerfeldt, was a regular contributor to the *Die Burg*, the journal of the Institut für deutsche Ostarbeit. Sommerfeldt's main research interest was the history of Polish anti-Semitism; he collected a large number of folk sayings concerning Jews (1942), and described nineteenth century Polish schemes for a special Jewish state (1944).

Sommerfeldt edited and translated an anti-Semitic tract from the early seventeenth century, seeing in this work a description of the futile struggle of the Poles against the economic parasite, the Jew. The achievements of the historical Polish state had been largely those of the German migrants, and the domination of the Poles by the Jews gave in Sommerfeldt's eyes a legitimacy to the German presence in Poland. The Poles simply lacked the ability to fight the Jewish threat. The conclusion of this German effort was to be a Poland without Jews, there would cease to be a Polish Jewry (1941a: 2–11). The 'paradise of the Jews' would be free of Jews (*judenfrei*). The

Jews filling the towns in the General Gouvernement were hampering their healthy development, for they lacked productive employment and their own source of food. They were also an obstacle in the way of a solution to the problem of over-population in the countryside (Sommerfeldt 1941a: 13).

In his afterword Sommerfeldt made clear how he viewed the 'Jewish question'. It was clear that the eighteenth and nineteenth century belief that the Jews could be 'improved' was no longer tenable. The only solution was to free each nation from its Jews, and to offer the Jews the chance to show that their racial character was capable of creating a viable socio-economic order. So far the Jews had failed to show this; they had failed to recognize that only those peoples which did honest work had the right to life. The long-standing demand that the Jews be put to work would be realized in this century and the survival of the Jewish people ('das Sein oder nicht Sein') would depend on whether it can produce a normal social order, i.e. the same range of productive professions as other peoples (1941a: 87). Sommerfeldt was emphatic that the Jews had no place in the European community of nations (1941b).⁷⁵

This is the context in which we should see Kloss' concern with the Jews being put to productive work. Kloss in general was dissatisfied with the conference he attended at the Institut für deutsche Ostarbeit, complaining that it was disorganized. He noted that he met with Dr Sommerfeldt, but that his meeting with Dr Hopf had been more instructive. Hopf had informed Kloss about debates over who was to be recognized as a German among different official bodies. The VOMI wanted to label as many Poles as possible as Germans, and recognize anyone who had 1/8 German blood as German. Dr Hopf wanted to introduce special certificates of German origin (*Deutschstammigkeitsbescheinigungen*) for those Poles who did not qualify as Germans under the present rules, thus creating a special group of 'favoured Poles' (*Vorzugspolen*) of partially German origin who could have the possibility after a probationary period of being accepted into the community of the German people (*Volksgemeinschaft*).

Kloss was fixated on the need for Jews to be retrained in vocational skills. But anyone who went to Cracow in 1941 and talked with colleagues in the front-line anti-Semitic Institut für deutsche Ostarbeit would have seen enough to convince them that a crime of almost unimaginable proportions was being perpetrated against the Jews of Poland and Eastern Europe.

Kloss and the Publikationsstelle Stuttgart–Hamburg

Kloss' role in scholarly information gathering, and in the publication and editing of materials for the use of official bodies was further developed in his role as head of the 'Publication Office' (Publikationsstelle) set up in 1941. In one report on the operation of the centre for 1941–2, Kloss

gave an account of its background and how it had been built up.⁷⁶ It had been set up after an agreement between the AA, the DAI and the VOMI with eighteen members of staff led by Kloss. Among the other staff members were Otto Lohr, Dr Hildegard Pichler and Dr Georg Hulbe. The centre was concerned with nationality questions overseas in general, but in particular paid attention to the *Volksdeutsche*. The centre gathered publications, undertook translations, gave confidential briefings, produced maps and statistics, kept lists of experts and held files on overseas Germans of importance. In a letter to Dr Fritz Erfurth of the propaganda department of the Reichskommissar for the Netherlands asking for material on overseas Dutch,⁷⁷ Kloss explained that the Publikationsstelle had been set up by the DAI on the initiative of the Foreign Ministry and that it was attached to the Überseedeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. One of its duties was the production of hectograph translations of publications on questions of nationality and ethnicity overseas. Kloss later described the activities of the centre as follows:

This centre had the task of conducting foundational research in ethnic relations outside Europe and was set up by the Foreign Office (1941) on the model of other similar 'publication centres' for Northeastern Europe (Berlin-Dahlem) and Southeast Europe (Vienna). The head of the publication centre Stuttgart–Hamburg was Dr H. Kloss, who at the same time continued as department head in the DAI. In matters of content the DAI was answerable only to the AA, administratively however it was answerable to the director of the DAI.⁷⁸

(Kloss 1966b: 10)

The extent to which the Publikationsstellen were permitted to be autonomous research centres had been raised by Kloss himself when he noted in the report on his trip to Vienna that the Publikationsstelle there had over twenty employees, almost all of whom were trained academics. This centre was attached to the Südostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and was headed by Dr W. Krallert.⁷⁹ The main theme of the report is the difficult relationship between the DAI and the FG, and the cold reception he had received from Professor O. Brunner, the director of the Südostdeutscher Forschungsgemeinschaft. Kloss saw the development of the Publikationsstelle as a further attempt on the part of the FG to exclude the DAI. In Appendix A of the report Kloss complained that the Südostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft was setting up a real institute hiding behind the 'harmless' name of a Publikationsstelle. The report ends by asking whether the suggestion should be made to the Ministry of the Interior that all DAI staff withdraw from the Überseedeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft.⁸⁰

The Publikationsstelle in Dahlem, to which Kloss compares the Publikationsstelle Stuttgart–

Hamburg, had grown out of the Prussian Geheimes Staatsarchiv and the Institut für Archivwissenschaft, both directed by Albert Brackmann (Burleigh 1988: 43–59). Founded in 1932, it played a central role in the network of official and scholarly agencies concerned with *Ostforschung*, and was

the crucial link between government ministries in Berlin and institutes further afield. The Publikationsstelle and North-East German Research Community were also directly involved in the creation of the main research institute in the occupied East: the Institut für deutsche Ostarbeit in Cracow.

(Burleigh 1988: 11)

Among the publications of the Publikationsstelle Stuttgart–Hamburg was a ‘confidential series’ on Germans and other ethnic groups overseas. The first of the series was a statistical handbook of the overseas Germans, *Statistisches Handbuch der Volksdeutschen in Übersee*, which gave information about different categories of Germans overseas, as well as language, confessional allegiance and the level of German ‘blood’ in the population. This volume was produced by Kloss in collaboration with the staff of the Publikationsstelle (Kloss 1943b). Another volume consisted of lectures by Einar Haugen given originally at the University of Oslo in 1938 (Haugen 1942).⁸¹

One politically significant volume published by the Publikationsstelle was a survey of Jews and Jewish organizations in the United States (Kloss 1944).⁸² This succinct volume gives a detailed breakdown of the geographical distribution of Jews in North America, as well as a survey of the Jewish press and a guide to Jewish organizations. It amounts to a detailed statistical and ideological profile of North American Jewry, intended to show the aims and activities of Jewish organizations as they strove to shape Jewish opinion in North America and hence throughout the world. This plethora of organizations, unrivalled by any other group, is in addition to the other areas of influence that the Jews command over internal and foreign policy. The work also gives a brief account of the activities of self-defence organizations such as the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress and the B’nai B’rith, noting in particular their participation in anti-Nazi activities (Kloss 1944: 128–30). The data is expressed in terms of numbers of *Glaubensjuden* (Jews by religious affiliation), *Sprachjuden* (Jews by language) and *Rassejuden* (Jews by race), these categories partly reflecting the categories used in the primary sources. Jews by language are those Jews who gave Yiddish or Hebrew as their mother-tongue in the US census (122,658 in the 1930). Kloss points out that most in this category are Yiddish speakers (*Jidden*), with perhaps a section of those born in Palestine being genuinely Hebrew speaking (1944: 6).

Kloss and group rights

Kloss' work on North America is largely concerned with the legal and institutional history of language rights and language oppression in domains like education, the media and the law. Kloss writes the external history of language rights and does not directly concern himself with what writers on North America have often called 'the immigrant experience'. Thus while his work is concerned with the language history and language rights of a range of groups the perspective from which they are viewed is very much 'top-down'. He assumes a continuity of labelling ('Italian', 'Mexican') from the home country to the host country, and looks for a consistent set of variables to use in defining the attributes of particular societies (Kloss 1966a). Kloss offers a comparative history of how these identities were received in North America and how they reacted to the transition in terms of pressure for particular rights. For Kloss the basic drives of identity are universal:

Every healthy language group has the desire to preserve and, where conditions are favorable, to expand the realm of its own language, a desire which could perhaps be compared to the urge to acquire, keep, and increase one's personal property which exists in every normal individual person. It is not objectionable that the individual has this urge to acquire property, but that he follow it without inhibitions.

(1977: 293)

This striking parallel between private property and group rights implies that the desire to increase one's wealth and the desire to expand 'the realm' of one's language are healthy or normal drives which need only be curbed where they reach a point of excess. For Kloss, it is justifiable if an emergent nation-speech community seeks to integrate others into its group, 'doubly justified in the case of a nation internally and externally yet unfinished and not yet completely certain of its spiritual unity, as was the case in America in the nineteenth century' (1977: 293). While Kloss is here overtly concerned with the United States, this concern can be read back onto the history of another nation 'internally and externally not unfinished', one 'uncertain of its spiritual unity', i.e. nineteenth and twentieth century Germany. Kloss' work, while its most natural home might be with the liberal sociology of language that emerged in the United States in the 1960s, is also grounded in the twentieth century drama of colonial German or the German language in exile. For German speakers lived not only in Eastern Europe, but in North America where their powerful impact on the economic, scientific, cultural and institutional development of the United States has been consistently underestimated both in the popular imagination and in scholarly writing. In the formative decades of Kloss' career, the two questions (Germans in the East, Germans in

America) were not divorced as they are now, and in understanding his writings on language rights it is important to understand that he identifies Germanness with the United States in a much more profound way than is usual today.

The case of Heinz Kloss raises a number of complex questions. Firstly, there are historical questions about the interrelations and power struggle between the various organizations such as the VDA, the VOMI, the DAI and AO. How important was the DAI? Then there are questions about the kinds of ideology these organizations promoted, and their relationship to National Socialism. Thirdly there is the question of Kloss' own life and work, and how he as an individual scholar fits into this complex set of institutional, social and intellectual circumstances. This leads onto the broader question of Kloss' work within linguistics. Does it make any difference to his place within linguistics if we conclude that Kloss himself was a National Socialist scholar? Should that affect the way we read his work as a whole?

A final obfuscation

It is clear that what Ahlzeig terms the 'faschistoid' (1994: 167) traits of Kloss' writings are not confined to the period of National Socialism.⁸³ In a summary of the policies of the National Socialist regime published in the 1960s (Kloss 1969: 342–3), Kloss distinguished three tendencies in the minority policies of the NSDAP. The first tendency (I) recognized the right of each linguistic community to its own language and hence recognized even (minority) ethnic groups within states as having the right to survive. Underlying this view was not necessarily the ethical notion of justice and common humanity, but rather the sense that people who change their ethnicity are somehow morally inferior and unable to co-operate creatively. The second tendency (II) Kloss associates with Italian fascism, which he characterizes as reaching a high point of 'exclusive integral' nationalism in South Tyrol. This extreme nationalism involved using the 1939 agreement with Germany to force out the ethnic Germans. The third direction (III) was found chiefly in the SS, and placed not the linguistic nation but the Nordic race at the centre of its preoccupations, with the aim of making this race a dominant elite. According to this approach, a Nordic Dane or Pole would be more valued than a non-Nordic German. While German would no doubt have been the *lingua franca* of this elite, it would have had no symbolic value, but only the status of a practical tool. The emperor Joseph II had carried out a similar policy, one in which language did not play a prominent role.

Kloss notes that III had a certain robust emphasis on the will in common with II, but that in its hesitation about assimilating speakers of other languages it had something in common with I,

since there was a desire to avoid assimilating non-Nordic elements into the German people. Kloss argues that tendency II was not influential in National Socialist Germany, the suppression of the Sorbian language after 1937 being an exception. Tendency I was however quite influential. Up to 1945 all schools of the Danish ethnic minority followed it; until the outbreak of war it was promoted in the Polish schools and in the Sudetengau incorporated by Germany in 1938 there were in 1945 still 350,000 Czechs in approximately 800 Czech schools.

However from 1940 onwards the three tendencies came into conflict in the occupied territories of Eastern Europe. *Gauleiter* Forster was carrying out a policy in line with tendency II in West Prussia-Danzig; in the Wartheland the policy was one of looking for desirable racial elements in order to reGermanize them (tendency III). Kloss notes that in the long run the racial tendency in National Socialism would have won out, and that the linguistic nations of Europe would have fallen under a Nordic racial elite. Thus the organization of people into autonomous nations would have broken down. Kloss concludes:

It is a curious paradox, that the concept and notion of the nation and nationalism have been most strongly discredited by a movement which according to its most inner being and real long-term objective can in no way be attributed to nationalism, but rather was the incarnation of something new.

(1969: 343)

This discussion – which represents a *defence* of ‘true’ Nazi language policies against Nordic chauvinism – must be one of the clearest examples of the abuse of the core/non-core distinction to be found in the academic literature on National Socialist ideology.

YIDDISH LINGUISTICS AND NATIONAL SOCIALISM

Introduction

By the turn of the century the impact of the Enlightenment and European nationalism on the Jewish world had led to a furious debate about the future of the Jewish people, one in which its status as a religious entity was put into question, and in which Marxism, socialism, liberalism and internationalism combined or fought against various strands of Zionism, territorialism and Diaspora nationalism. Along with the religious question, the so-called 'language question' came to haunt modern Jewish thought. This language question involved a debate about the actual and ideal inter-relationship between Hebrew, Yiddish and the national languages of the states in which Jews lived.

The rise of the European vernacular languages and state-building nationalism implied that the language a child learnt at the mother's breast would also be the language of school, government, the newspapers, the law and literature. The mother-tongue, the language of domesticity and intimacy, of in-group identification, would also become the language of society and the state. In symbolic terms, the language of the idealized mother (home and family) and the idealized father (law and government) would be the same. The application of this model to the Jewish language situation at the turn of the century might well appear unproblematic. Yiddish was the mother-tongue and its functions should be extended as far as possible into the societal domains occupied by the co-territorial European languages, Polish, Romanian, Russian, etc. This process could be carried out in the Diaspora, with Jews forming a culturally distinct 'nation' with a unity across the frontiers of the European nation states. This would give a separate Yiddish school system or systems, Yiddish newspapers, institutes of higher learning, etc. Alternatively, a new territory would be obtained and settled by Jews ('territorialism'), or Jews would return to the land of their 'fathers', the land of Israel (*Eretz Israel*).

Calvary (1916/17) argued strongly for the value of Yiddish as a national language, and rejected

the notion that Yiddish was a dialect of German. Posing the question of the distinction between dialect and language, he took the absence or presence of an autonomous literary language as criterial. Hence Swiss German was a dialect of German, while Dutch was an independent language. By this criterion, Yiddish had been a language since at least the 1880s. But what then of Low German (*Niederdeutsch*), generally considered a dialect, but which has a substantial literature? Calvary noted that proponents of the status of Low German also argue that it is a language, not a dialect. Calvary argued however that Low German literature is closely dependent on High German literature, something that cannot be maintained with Yiddish literature, the occasional High German influence notwithstanding. Yiddish then had its own authentic style, the hallmark of an autonomous literature (1916/17:31). If one were to judge Yiddish merely by its vocabulary and structural features, it would be counted a German dialect; but once we consider whether an authentic national literature has been created on the basis of the vernacular language, then Yiddish has its own style, one that has transcended the vernacular form.

While Calvary was adamant that Yiddish had its own literary form, he conceded that it lacked a scientific style (i.e. register). However he argued that the same could be said of German as compared with French and English. German has failed so far to develop a truly objective and restrained mode of expression. Yiddish is developing. What was once only a spoken, evocative language is now on its way to developing a style. In other words, both languages are developing from different starting points to a new parity. Calvary took no side in the Jewish language question (i.e. Hebrew versus Yiddish); he was merely concerned to assert the rights of Yiddish in relation to German (1916/17: 32).

Yiddish, however, was viewed by many as a symptom of the crisis, as a hybrid language, part-Jewish (Hebrew–Aramaic) and part-Gentile (Romance, Germanic and Slavic), a mirror of the fallen state of the Jewish nation in exile and a language of powerlessness and passivity. Only Hebrew with its associations of dignity and poetic strength and atavistic link to the Jewish past and Jewish nationhood could supply the radical break with the present and reconnect the future of the Jewish people to its lost glory. The idealized language of the father could become again the language drunk in with the mother's milk. The notion of Yiddish as a 'fusion language', associated with the work of the Yiddishist linguist Max Weinreich, can be understood as part of a reaction to the hybrid label. Weinreich suggests that a fusion language is a special kind of language: 'It is inherent in the nature of a fusion language that linguistic features stemming from one component are passed onto items in a different one and thus blends absent from the stock languages come into being' (1956a: 627).¹

Romantic nationalism in the European Jewish context might mean either the promotion of the vernacular language, Yiddish, or a desire to return to a lost glorious state, to the Biblical homeland

and the ancient language, Hebrew. Epstein (1919/20: 326) compared the people of Israel's struggle to regain the use of Hebrew to the situation of a patient after an illness struggling to recapture a full command of language. As long as the organism continues to live, its memories can be revived. The words of Hebrew are a treasure that has been preserved for thousands of years, latent in the Jewish people. Given the chance, word memories (*Worterinnerungen*) can be revived and rejuvenated. Hebrew will thus join the 'symphony of languages' in a new era of the reconciliation and peace first proclaimed in that language. The rebirth of Israel and the revival of its language, Hebrew, will represent a double miracle, the curing of a two thousand year amnesia.

The rise of Yiddish studies

The situation in the early part of the twentieth century was a confused one. Yiddish was not the mother-tongue of the linguistically assimilated Jews of Western and Eastern Europe, nor of the Sephardic Jews; Hebrew was nobody's mother-tongue. Many Yiddishists conceded the abstract cultural priority of Hebrew; and even groups who opposed Yiddish on theoretical grounds recognized its value as a means of reaching the masses. These discussions were not carried out in an academic vacuum: Jews were under physical threat through periodic outbreaks of violence (pogroms) and lived with varying degrees of official hostility and oppression. The debate about the future of Jewry was conducted within a crisis, one where assimilation and anti-Semitism combined to pose a threat to the survival of the Jewish people, and in which religion could no longer be counted on to provide spiritual unity and a rallying point against oppression. Mass emigration to the United States in the 1880s seemed to herald the simultaneous liberation and assimilation of a large section of world Jewry into the American melting-pot.

Few if any of the early proponents of Yiddish studies and advocates of Yiddishism were themselves native speakers of Yiddish in the sense in which we would understand that term today. They had had to move sociologically or psychologically far enough away from Yiddish to be able to see its potential value, both as an instrument of nationalism and an object of study: 'a language'. At the Czernowitz conference in 1908,² one of the founding moments in modern Yiddishism, Nathan Birnbaum was unable to address the delegates, since he had not yet mastered sufficient Yiddish (Goldsmith 1987: 188). The pioneering Yiddish linguist, Ber Borokhov (1881–1917), was a left-wing Zionist who wrote his first article in Russian, but his final publications in Yiddish (Meisel 1966: 9).

In Borokhov's programmatic article on Yiddish and its role in modern Jewish life the whole force of the rhetoric derives from a perception of crisis in the current state of Yiddish:

At the moment of the creation of the national culture there is terrible chaos: the language of the mass of the people is divided up into countless dialects [. . .] Only philology can put an end to this muddled state of affairs. It goes to the root of every word and every form, their history and the development of their meaning; and on the strength of this philology teaches us to understand them correctly.

(Borokhov [1913a] 1966: 53–4)

Philology, Borokhov argued, was distinct from linguistics: ‘it is not empty theorizing for scholars, for the members of an elite, but rather a practical guide for the people’ ([1913a] 1966: 53). Yiddish linguists thus began with the notion that languages can be in a better or worse state, and that the development of a respectable literature would both follow on from the attainment of a higher level of development and play its part in raising the level of the language. For Borokhov, the most fundamental task of Yiddish philology was to educate the people in their own language, to teach them to speak and write properly in the mother-tongue (*mutersprakh*, [1913a] 1966: 53). National culture did not consist solely of the production of literary works by great writers. Philology therefore both looks to find order in the existing language and to create order, it aims to create something that is natural, to cultivate a better language. A similar metaphorical fusion of ideas of naturalness and the need for human intervention is found in Noyekh Prilutski’s normative writings,³ where Yiddish is compared to a river that has burst its banks or a tree that needs pruning (1909: 53).

Borokhov differed from many modern Yiddishists in his view that exile or Diaspora was a pathological or unnatural state. The promotion of Yiddish and the proletarianization of Jewish society were tools of an ultimate assimilation of the Jews into the broad mass of humanity.⁴ By contrast, Matthias (Matisyohu) Mieses⁵ argued that language was the key to national identity; the defence of Yiddish was the defence of the autonomy and integrity of the Jewish people (see Goldsmith 1987). Although Mieses conceded the cultural priority of Hebrew, he argued that Yiddish speakers were the core of world Jewry, with the linguistically assimilated and the Sephardim unable to compete in terms of numbers or cultural vitality. Ladino (Dzhudezmo) had not achieved the fundamental break from Spanish that Yiddish had from German; the Sephardic world was sunk in lethargy and cultural sterility. All the main Hebrew writers came from the ‘Yiddish Pale’ (Goldsmith 1987: 151). If Yiddish was a ‘jargon’, then so were the other European languages; the Romance languages had evolved out of Latin, and Yiddish had developed from German:

From a linguistic standpoint Yiddish is a language like all others; from a Jewish historical standpoint it is our national language; from the modern standpoint of the psychology

of nations, this language comprises a large folklore, hundreds of tales, and thousands of emotional and conceptual associations of our people.

(quoted in Goldsmith 1987: 207)

Mieses argued that the nineteenth century had given birth to language rights, and the twentieth century had the responsibility to create language rights (King 1991: 29). Mieses saw in Yiddish the only hope for the future of the Jews; religion could not prevent assimilation and Hebrew could not descend from its elevated sphere to become the language of the streets. Yiddish was a bulwark protecting Hebrew; in those places where Yiddish had disappeared, Hebrew had followed (i.e. in Germany).

The primary cultural and intellectual institution of Eastern European Jewry, the Yivo, was founded in Berlin in 1925 by Nokhem Shtif and Max Weinreich, and its headquarters set up in Vilna (Vilnius), Poland. The Yivo had four permanent sections: philological, historical, economic–statistical and psychological–pedagogical. In the third collection on linguistics published by the Yivo the aims of the institute were set out as follows:

The spiritual uprising of the great masses of the Jewish people in the countries of their densest settlement has called into being new cultural necessities the satisfaction of which urgently demands the creation of adequate cultural institutions. It is the aim of the Yiddish Scientific Institute to extend a helping hand to these people in their struggle for cultural emancipation and the Institute hopes for assistance in this work from all organizations and individuals who are interested in Jewish culture.

(Yivo 1929: [xix])

The manifesto uses the term ‘Yiddish cultural life’, and in effect the Yivo was set up as the primary cultural instance of an ethnic group, the world’s Yiddish speakers.

It is important to distinguish between two kinds of Yiddishism: one which viewed Yiddish as the means to a particular end, as part of a wider social ideology; the other, chiefly associated with modern Yiddish linguistics, gradually came to see the language as an end in itself, an object of cultivation and the marker of the limits of an ideal cultural space. This second tendency came to the fore in the 1930s, and found its home in the Yivo. The history of Yiddishism and Yiddish linguistics has been largely written by representatives of Yiddishism of the second kind. Their accounts of intellectual history have therefore tended to judge early twentieth century thinkers anachronistically by the standards of this ideology.

Contemporary Yiddishism, while recognizing the importance of *Germanistik* for Yiddish

studies, is concerned above all to establish the primacy of the Yiddishist point of view. On this view, the history of Yiddish studies culminates with the establishment of an independent discipline, in the way that for a historian a national history culminates in the achieving of political autonomy. This academic Yiddishism also carries with it important assumptions about the history and nature of Yiddish, in particular about its origin and age (Katz 1986). Those who argue that Yiddish is approximately a thousand years old, the ‘millennialists’, are also largely ‘students of the “Yiddishist” school in Yiddish linguistics, the branch of Yiddish language science founded by Borokhov ([1913a] 1966) which views Yiddish Studies as a self-centred discipline rather than a satellite of Germanic studies’ (Katz 1985: 91). Yiddish is not simply a step-child of German dialects; it is not an off-shoot of German, rather it is one link in a continuous and ancient linguistic heritage. This continuity is expressed in the Semitic component of Yiddish, which, Katz argues, did not arise in Yiddish through a gradual process of absorption, but was present in the spoken language of the Jews when they came into contact with Germanic speech forms. This can be seen, for example, in the congruity of the behaviour of the Semitic and the Germanic components with regard to sound changes.

These assertions about the origin of Yiddish involve a rejection of the widely held belief that words of Hebrew and Aramaic origin in the Yiddish lexicon result from a process of admixture consequent upon the symbiosis between Yiddish, Hebrew and Aramaic in Jewish life, especially religious instruction and practice. This latter model Katz terms the ‘text theory’, according to which ‘the vast majority of Semitisms in Yiddish entered over the centuries from the frequently studied texts of the Pentateuch, Talmud and later Rabbinic writings, and the regularly recited texts of canonical prayer’ (Katz 1985: 88). Katz’ ‘continual transmission theory’ claims that ‘[a]n unbroken chain of language links ancient Hebrew to Aramaic to Yiddish’ (1985: 100).

The debate over the origin of Yiddish naturally has consequences for the evaluation of premodern texts, specifically, Old Yiddish literature. For Katz, these texts, while of great historical interest, are far removed from the history of spoken Yiddish and therefore misleading if interpreted as documents belonging to that history. For example, the 1382 Cambridge Codex lacks any Semitisms:

So strict is the stylistic aversion to Semitisms in the document, that Germanic Component words are wilfully misspelled to fill out an alphabetic acrostic, to avoid using Semitisms even in the case of those letters restricted to the Semitic component.

(Katz 1985: 97)

This rejection of literary texts as direct sources for the history of the language is complemented

by the assertion of the priority of comparative reconstruction as a methodology, ‘undertaken with the necessary safeguards (including overwhelming consistency of correspondences and accurate retrieval of the data)’ (Katz 1987: 47).

The question of where these texts belong remains moot, given that the linguistic assessment of these texts is dependent on the resolution of a prior set of nationalist or quasi-nationalist questions. Max Weinreich, for example, taking exception to Marchand’s claim that the Cambridge Codex of 1382 is not Yiddish since ‘the themes are not particularly Jewish’, claims that we should talk of differing styles within the history of written Yiddish: ‘Then the texts that gave the surface impression of being German turn out to be would-be German, or Germanized Yiddish’ (Marchand 1959; Weinreich 1960: 100, 109). In discussing the nature of Old Yiddish, Frakes (1985) reviews the diverse answers given to the question: Middle High German or Yiddish? The scholars of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* dated the origin of Yiddish in the sixteenth century with the corruption of German,⁶ and this led to editing practices in which the differences between Old Yiddish texts in Hebrew letters and Middle High German texts were overlooked. The mirror image of this approach was that advocated by Maks Erik and Israel Zinberg (Yisroyl Tsinberg) who looked to Old Yiddish to find the origins of a vernacular tradition, one based on a class struggle between Yiddish and Hebrew (Tsinberg 1928).⁷ The Germanist James Marchand proposed four criteria which must be satisfied by any text to qualify as Yiddish: it must contain at least 0.01 per cent Hebrew words, its theme must be ‘particularly Jewish’, it must not contain any non-Yiddish dialect forms, and it must not have been copied from a Roman-alphabet source. Many scholars have looked away from purely linguistic (contrastive) criteria to consider ‘the broader cultural contexts of the literary documents’. This approach is associated by Frakes with Max Weinreich, Walter Röll, Wulf-Otto Dreessen (1985: 11).⁸

The emergence of advocates of Yiddish, and the beginnings of a modern academic culture, set up for the study of Yiddish, are part of a wider process whereby Yiddish culture was seen by many Jewish intellectuals in both Western and Eastern Europe as representing a vibrant and authentic culture under threat. Looking back in 1979, the Yiddish linguist Solomon Birnbaum contrasted the Jews of Western and Central Europe with Eastern European Jews:

A visit to a Jewish town, or to the Jewish quarter of a town in Eastern Europe made it clear to a Westerner that the Jews here formed a separate cultural identity. The Jews of Western and Central Europe, however, did not. There were no such distinct outlines – the borderlines between them and their Gentile surroundings were more than blurred. They had the same educational background as their respective neighbours, the same general outlook and practically identical customs. Apart from certain traces in the

speech of some, the language they spoke was the same as that of the Gentiles around them. [...] It follows from all this that they were split up into as many groups as were the civilizations in whose territories they lived.

(1979: 19)

The contrast with the 'East Ashkenazic Jews' was quite evident:

The cultural borderlines between them and their neighbours were not blurred. In other words, they were unmistakably a people apart – a distinctive ethnic or national group. They had their own religion, their own language, their own literature, their own customs and costumes. Thus, in the cultural sphere, they lived an autonomous life. It was not merely a slightly coloured variant of somebody else's life: nor was it ruled by laws that had grown from another people's soul, or measured with a standard derived from another people's nature. Not only did they form a distinctive cultural group in each country where they lived, but all these groups together constituted a unity. There *were*, of course, regional differences, but they by no means coincided with the political frontiers. The differentiation resulting from political frontiers dividing them was slight or nil.

The perception of this dichotomy led to interest in Eastern European Jewish folklore, in Jewish mysticism and Hasidism,⁹ and in Yiddish literature, particularly the history of Old Yiddish texts.¹⁰

External social and political factors also played an important role in the development of Yiddish studies within Germany. Althaus (1972: 1356) argued that the upsurge of interest in Yiddish studies was in part fuelled by a shift in attitude during the First World War and a 'sudden, politically motivated interest in Yiddish of German governmental and military departments'. Spielrein (1917/18: 285) for example speaks of a 'flood' of popular guides to Jews and Yiddish appearing. According to Althaus, Jews in Eastern Europe came to be seen as a culturally and politically important outpost of German culture in the East. Yiddish was considered a dialect of German: 'By these means a jubilant German people, shortly before humiliation and defeat, welcomed the expansion of its cultural horizons towards Eastern Europe; this mood prevailed until 1933' (1972: 1356). This positive mood had in any case a strongly paternalistic colouring. Rose (1990: 5) talks of German anti-Semitism oscillating between 'a sort of suspicious benevolence and hatred'.

This upsurge of feeling is evident in the works of Strack (1916) and Perles (1918). Strack's

dictionary of Yiddish was intended for German speakers such as officials, soldiers and businessmen brought suddenly into contact with Yiddish by the German occupation of Congress-Poland, Lithuania and Courland during the First World War. For Strack, this occupation offered the Jews of Eastern Europe liberation from Russian oppression. His dictionary was also directed at scholars of language, especially Germanists, folklorists and the Eastern European Jews themselves. Strack rejects the labelling of Yiddish as corrupt German ('ein verderbtes Deutsch'), arguing that it has as much claim to the title 'language' as English, and that Yiddish has a developing literature, fixed grammatical rules and the ability to create new forms (1916: v). The dictionary assumes a knowledge of German, and therefore does not include those Yiddish words which are identical in German. It also omits thieves' cant, so-called *Gaunersprache*. At the end of the introduction Strack takes comfort in having served his beloved German fatherland, in having promoted scholarship and in having brought the Eastern European Jews spiritually closer to the German people and others who wish to learn about them (Strack 1916: xv).

Solomon Birnbaum conjectured that it might have been the war that provided him with a 'reputable publisher' for his *Grammatik der Jiddischen Sprache* ([1918] 1966), noting that the Eastern High Command published a dictionary in seven languages, the *Sieben-Sprachen-Wörterbuch* (1918), with equivalents to German in Polish, Russian, 'White Ruthenian', Lithuanian, Latvian and Yiddish (Birnbaum 1972: 243). Similarly, Perles (1918: 296–7) recorded that the war period had led to a dramatic increase in interest in the previously despised 'jargon', because it had become an important means of communication in areas occupied by the German army. Furthermore it had been recognized that the Jews of Eastern Europe had produced 'a flexible and expressive literary language'. Perles however was not optimistic about the future of Yiddish (1918: 297).

Birnbaum's was one of a number of dissertations in Yiddish studies submitted in German language universities before the Second World War following on from Felix Rosenberg's study of folk songs (1888). Althaus (1972: 1355–6) lists the following authors: Jacob Gerzon (Heidelberg, 1902), Pauline Fleiss (Bern, 1913), Rachel Mieses (Vienna, 1918), Solomon Birnbaum (Würzburg, 1922), Leopold Schnitzler (Prague, 1922), Max Weinreich¹¹ (Marburg, 1923), Bruno Kormann (Hamburg, 1930), Nechama Leibowitz (Marburg, 1931), Jakob Meitlis (Jena, 1933) and Yechiel Fischer (Heidelberg, 1936). Schnitzler's dissertation was directed by Erich Gierach, also the mentor of Franz Beranek (see below).

Gerzon¹² was a student of Wilhelm Braune, and not a Yiddish speaker. Landau¹³ (1904) was critical of Gerzon, not least because he did not know Yiddish well enough. But Landau also 'objected to Gerzon's comparative study on the grounds that Gerzon treated Middle High German as an absolute construct and norm' (Strauch 1990: 93).

This criticism illustrates a more general point. It is an oversimplification to talk of a Germanist

school of Yiddish linguistics which considers Yiddish a German dialect and a Yiddishist school which promotes the autonomy of Yiddish and Yiddish studies. Landau, while being credited with being the first scholar to bring Yiddish into 'the orbit of Germanics' (Strauch 1990: 92, citing Max Weinreich 1954: 73n), also laid down a set of prerequisites for the study of Yiddish which would effectively exclude any traditionally trained Germanist from participating in Yiddish studies.¹⁴ Strauch (1990: 93) records that all the reviewers with the exception of Jellinek comment on the fact that Gerzon was not a native speaker of Yiddish; this was deplored by Schatz, but seen by Richard Loewe (1904: 44) as a cause for congratulation. As Strauch notes, Gerzon's work has been more influential within *Germanistik* than in Yiddish studies (1990: 94–5). In the latter discipline he is recorded as an early Germanist with an interest in Yiddish grammar, and for his advocacy of an East Central German ('Ostmitteldeutsch') origin for Yiddish.

Solomon Birnbaum

Solomon Birnbaum (1891–1989) was born in Vienna, the son of the Jewish nationalist thinker and Yiddishist Nathan Birnbaum.¹⁵ Birnbaum's survey and grammar of Yiddish (1979) was dedicated to his father 'the first western champion of Yiddish' and to his mother, Rose Birnbaum. In his 1918 grammar of Yiddish Birnbaum noted that the question of the origin of Yiddish remained largely unexplored, and that not much could be definitely said on this matter. However he observed that those linguists who have concerned themselves with this question argue that the departure point for analysis should be Middle High German, not New High German as popular opinion would have it. Birnbaum also stated categorically that the language of the Jews of the Middle Ages was German in the beginning: 'Ihre Sprache war anfangs das Deutsche' ([1918] 1966: 8), though this statement was qualified with respect to 'accent' (see below). The Jews, however, quickly adapted German to express their own particularity, their spiritual and intellectual distinctiveness which 'lived in the garb of a culture worlds removed from the German'.¹⁶ By 'garb', Birnbaum means the liturgical languages of the Jews, Hebrew and Aramaic. The influence of these languages was central to the development of Yiddish as a language with its own autonomy ('Sonderleben'); syntax and grammar began to diverge, and the phonetic differences from German – which were in all probability there from the very beginning ('seit jeher') – became increasingly marked. Other changes followed on from these initial or primary transformations, though they were not directly attributable to 'the national factor' (1966: 8). The frequently adduced explanation for the origin of Yiddish in the isolation of the ghetto is mistaken, for the ghetto arises out of the same causes that can be adduced to explain the origin of Yiddish, and in any event Jews remained in close contact with the surrounding non-Jewish population. Nor is it correct to say that the

Jews spoke German as the Germans did up to the point at which they left Germany and that Yiddish arose first on Slavic territory. For, in spite of the dialectal differences, Yiddish shows a high degree of unity. Nevertheless it is likely that the absence of co-territorial German accelerated the process of differentiation between the Western and Eastern dialects of Yiddish ([1918] 1966: 9). Yiddish literature arose with the language itself, as one would expect in the case of a civilized people ('wie es sich bei einem Kulturvolke naturgemäss von sich ergab', [1918] 1966: 9). This literature was directed primarily at those who were removed from Rabbinic, Talmudic and Biblical texts, i.e. mainly women (and a few men) who did not know Hebrew or Aramaic, or did not know them well.

Much later, Birnbaum, speaking of value judgements about language, wrote that these value judgements are:

based on very deep-rooted facts of group psychology. That even scholars do not always escape its influence is borne out by the way they often take sides when the question of choosing between two foreign languages arises. Many of them subconsciously prefer the language of the bigger and therefore more powerful people. As a rule, that language is, naturally, the one with the better developed literary style and the one which has enjoyed the attention of philologists.

(1979: 4–5)

Birnbaum continued with an attack on the classifications of Germanic dialects promoted by linguists such as Adolf Bach and Heinz Kloss:

When, therefore, a scholar classifies Ukrainian, Afrikaans or Yiddish as belonging not to the 'higher' but to the 'lower' category of languages – referring to them as dialects, etc. – then his valuation is not objective, he has allowed power to be the deciding factor in his classification. A negative attitude, such as this one, may arise from another cause. A layman who hears or reads a language similar to and yet clearly different from his own, feels disturbed by forms that do not tally with what he considers the norm. In the scholar these feelings may then crystallize into that 'schoolmaster' attitude which is strong in us all, and which will tolerate only the known, the clearly defined, the rule, while abhorring the unknown, the undefined, the seemingly chaotic.

Birnbaum's dissertation comprised a study of the Semitic component in Yiddish, the first draft of which was written in a military hospital in autumn 1918. In this work Birnbaum talks of the

unexplored nature of the history of Yiddish, a language that emerged out of the High German speech of German Jews of the late Middle Ages and the early modern era (1922: 4). Birnbaum also employs the concept of the fusion of the components of Yiddish, one that was to become the central in modern Yiddish linguistics, particularly in the works of Max Weinreich: 'Yiddish consists essentially of three elements fused into a unity: Germanic, Semitic and Slavic' (1922: 4). Recognition of the fusion nature of Yiddish involves a rejection of the often-heard assertion that the Semitic component covers the sphere of religion and spiritual and intellectual matters. In fact, 'Indo-Germanic' words also appear in this domain of the vocabulary, and Semitic words also appear in the domain of everyday 'realia' (1922: 53).

In 1979 Birnbaum listed the explanations that have been offered for the significance of Jewish languages. These included 'race, national spirit, conservatism, loyalty [to the language of the former homeland], migration, the ghetto, religion' (1979: 9–15). For Birnbaum, the only communality that all Jewish languages possess is the (original) commitment of the speakers to Judaism as a religion: 'The group-forming factor among the Jews has been religion.' This is confirmed by the script, since '[t]hough it might sound strange to us in this secularized world, it is none the less a fact that the script in which a language is written is, broadly speaking, decided by the religion of its speakers' (1979: 13). The secularization of Yiddish has been accompanied by the loss of much of the Hebrew and Aramaic elements. Though Birnbaum is well aware that one cannot map the components neatly onto spheres of life and function, nonetheless there is a strong relation between the Semitic components in Jewish languages and the religious culture within which the speakers lived. This linguistic shift:

is a linguistic indication of the fact that the 'secularized sections' have in reality become independent groups and that one ought not, logically, speak of a new development having started in Yiddish, for example, but that it would be more correct to say that Yiddish had begun to split up into two divergent languages.

(1979: 14)

Group identity is the key for Birnbaum; in that sense, at the moment the Jews adopted German within their own society it was 'at once Jewish' and therefore by implication Yiddish. Birnbaum fixes the origin of Yiddish from the moment the Jews began to settle in German-speaking territory; according to this sociological criterion, Yiddish originated – as far as one can tell – in the ninth century (1979: 57).

For Birnbaum, secular Yiddish and the Yiddish of the world of orthodoxy, the *frume yidn*, are evolving apart. It is to this latter group that one must look for hope about the future of Yiddish,

for ‘there is still a religious core among whom there has not been a break in the generations and whose mother tongue is Yiddish’¹⁷ (1979: 43). For Birnbaum’s point of departure was not the diaspora nationalism of mainstream Yiddishism but a religious definition of Jewishness and Jewish languages. German influence on Yiddish and the resulting Germanization (‘*daytshmerish*’) is a symptom of the effects of the Jewish Enlightenment (*Haskalah*) on Yiddish, and the secular nationalist Yiddishists are not in a good position to fight it:

The war that the Yiddishists are waging against *daytshmerish* can only be a half-war. Their world stands on the foundations of European modernity, consequently they have to speak its language. And they term ‘Yiddishized’ or ‘Yiddish’ forms that we would characterize as *daytshmerish*.

(quoted in Schaechter 1962: 33)

Birnbaum’s career in Germany

Birnbaum was appointed to teach Yiddish at the University of Hamburg, and subsequently published a number of articles in leading German linguistics journals (1931/2, 1932, 1933). In a brief memoir on this period (1972), Birnbaum recounted that Professor Conrad Borchling of the University of Hamburg had been conducting a seminar on Yiddish. Borchling subsequently proposed that Birnbaum be appointed lecturer in Yiddish studies: ‘And this is how the first modern lectureship for Yiddish in a university came into being’ (1972: 243). Birnbaum described those attending the seminar in the following terms:

Their [the students’] reasons for coming to my seminars varied greatly. Some did so because of the ‘national’ value of Yiddish, the orthodox Jews came because of its religious associations, others again were attracted by its literary and/or linguistic interest. There were no non-Jewish undergraduates, if I remember rightly. Interest in Yiddish existed only at the top, so that the two non-Jewish participants were professors of the University. One of them was Heinrich Meyer-Benfey, a great expert in many languages and literatures and a wonderful human being.

(1972: 244)

Birnbaum gave the following list of seminars (1972: 244): Introduction to Yiddish language; Yiddish phonology; Historical phonology of Yiddish; Yiddish for beginners; Readings from

Mendele's *Fishke der krume*; Yiddish poetry; Comparative study of old and new Yiddish Bible translations; readings from Rabbi Nachman's Tales; Reading from the memoirs of Glikl Haml; Introduction to Yiddish philology; Reading Schulem Aleichem's *Shprintze*; Comparative Phonology of the Yiddish language; Yiddish texts; Yiddish folksongs; The history of the Yiddish language; Yiddish literature.

As a result of interest shown by Heinz Kloss, at that time an Assistant in the Deutsches Ausland-Institut (DAI), and Franz Thierfelder¹⁸ of the Deutsche Akademie, Birnbaum had worked out a plan for an institute of Yiddish studies as a branch of the Deutsche Akademie. A proposal was published by Birnbaum in the *Mitteilungen* of the academy (1930). Birnbaum described the situation as follows:

In 1927, a non-Jew, Heinz Kloss, Assistant in the Deutsches Ausland-Institut, came to see me, showing an intense interest in Yiddish. Some time later, Dr Franz Thierfelder, of the Akademie zur wissenschaftlichen Erforschung und Pflege des Deutschtums – Deutsche Akademie, and Kloss conceived the idea of an institute for the languages closely related to German. One of these would be Yiddish and I was to be put in charge of that department. I was asked to work out a programme and it was published in the *Mitteilungen* (1930) of the *Akademie*, where, somewhat earlier, an article by Kloss had appeared, entitled *Deutsche und Jidden* [Kloss 1930] (he introduced that designation, adapting it from the German term *Jiddisch*). [. . .] However, the institute never came into being.

(1972: 244)

Birnbaum had reservations about Kloss' term *Nebensprachen* (Kloss 1929a) as it suggested a value judgement. Kloss and Thierfelder were persuaded to change to *Nahsprachen* ('neighbouring languages'). Thus Birnbaum's proposal is for a 'Jiddische Abteilung des Nahsprachen-Instituts'; however Thierfelder and Kloss continued with the term *Nebensprache* in their own writings. Thierfelder for example gave renditions of a German original in Dutch, Afrikaans, Yiddish, *Pennsylvaniadeutsch* ('Pennsylvania Dutch'), and West Friesisch as examples of *Nebensprachen* of German (1930: 34–40), thus articulating the core–periphery relationship to which Birnbaum objected.¹⁹ While Thierfelder was adamant that Kloss' concept of *Nebensprache* was meant to affirm and not deny the autonomy and value of the languages so classified, he made it clear that while German and Dutch could be thought of as peers (and therefore German was as much a *Nebensprache* of Dutch and Dutch was of German), both these languages were much more highly developed than Afrikaans, Yiddish and *Pennsylvaniadeutsch* (1930: 17).

In his later discussion of German as a ‘world language’ (1938), Thierfelder returned to the topic of Yiddish in the context of a discussion of the merits of artificial languages such as Volopük and Esperanto. While English might be the dominant world language, German could lay claim to be the dominant language of Europe, when one considered the number of first and second language speakers (the latter to be found particularly in Eastern and Southeastern Europe (1938: 23)). While it was a German (J.M. Schleyer) who had given impetus to the international language movement with the invention of Volopük, it was the Polish Jew Zamenhof who achieved success and recognition for his language Esperanto, particularly in Germany. Thierfelder attributed this success to the support of the ‘world press’ and ‘the powers that lie behind it’. In any case, the notion of an artificial language was not a foreign concept to the Jews who had their own inter-state communication system, namely Yiddish, and Jewry stood to gain from any cultural levelling between distinct peoples. Thierfelder was willing to give credit to Zamenhof for not making the mistake of inventing the basic elements of Esperanto, and for adapting them from extant languages (especially the Romance languages), though he makes the familiar point that Esperanto is not so easy if one is a Russian or a Chinese speaker (1938: 32); nor did he reject the notion of a common means of communication between peoples for some purposes. However Germans had no use for such a language; problems of international communication were the responsibility and the problem of smaller states. Germany had no reason to support the creation of a form of communication that would in all probability have a negative effect on its place in the world (1938: 30–1). In any case such a language would have a limited scope: it could not be used for literary expression, since its very basis is simplicity and ease of comprehension. The idiomatic complexity of national languages is the very quality that gives them their identity and appeal; no artificial language can have idiomaticity, since such languages do not flow from the spirit and blood (‘Geist und Blut’) of a people. The literary use of an artificial language transforms the world into a spiritual desert (‘geistige Wüste’), it annihilates all humanity. Against a possible charge of exaggeration, Thierfelder affirmed that such a language could not aim at anything less than total domination (‘totale Herrschaft’), and this would require the destruction of everything that people held dear (1938: 30–1).

One problem that arises for ‘civilized languages’ (*Kultursprachen*) is that if they are spoken in distant and intellectually underdeveloped countries they undergo ‘barbaric’ simplification, and the vocabulary is taken over by foreign words, so that eventually the language no longer resembles its original form. This process gives rise to ‘mixed languages’, but these processes do not produce great languages: Pidgin English and French Creole for example. German has produced one such language, namely Yiddish (and here Thierfelder uses the term *Nebensprache*). Though Yiddish did not arise in the same circumstances as these other ‘mixed languages’, it does have formal similarities.

Could one of these ‘stunted languages’ (*Stummelsprachen*) become an international language? What about a simplified form of German (1938: 30)? But this ‘pseudo-German’ would be laughable; basic English is little more than a teaching aid (1938: 34).

Thus Yiddish, like Esperanto, is an expression of the Jewish spirit; these languages reveal the drive to level linguistic and cultural differences that is a particular characteristic of the Jewish people.

When after the war Kloss came under attack for his activities during the National Socialist period, Kloss did not (to my knowledge) mention in his defence his well-informed attack on the notion that Yiddish was an unimportant ‘Jargon’ and his pre-war advocacy of it as an important *Kultursprache* with an impressive literature and a legitimate claim to serious academic attention (Kloss 1929a, 1929c, 1930). Writing in the *Mitteilungen* of the German Academy in 1930, Kloss had compared the positions of German and Yiddish, noting that the speakers of these languages have in common the envy and mistrust with which they are viewed by others. For their strengths and talents in particular areas (the Jewish speculator and the German farmer), they pay with contempt for their lack of achievement in other areas. The speakers of each language have given expression to their separateness by the use of different writing systems (Yiddish through the Hebrew alphabet, German by the use of so-called ‘Gothic’ script or *Fraktur*). Both languages are under threat in the United States, though Yiddish is in a slightly better position. Outsiders have often lumped the two languages together, so that in the war (the First World War) Yiddish speakers were persecuted as Germans. But, concludes Kloss, the war only awakened a certain curiosity in Germany about Yiddish; the notion of Yiddish as an autonomous entity was not considered. Yiddish was neglected in Germany for a number of reasons: it was written in a strange alphabet; it was hard for the ‘Teutono-centric’ Germans to conceive of a language being related to German but having a cultural life of its own. There was also the perception that Jews were ‘other’ and therefore worse, the mixing of racial politics as with linguistic politics that blinded Germans to the fact that the speaker of the German language could be extended not only by groups such as the Volga Germans, but also by German-speaking Negroes or German-speaking Chinese. The Germans looked on Yiddish in the way that the Dutch react to an Afrikaans-speaking Negro, or the French to a French-speaking Haitian. The perception of racial superiority obscures the fact of the linguistic affiliation.

In Germany this combination of laziness in learning the alphabet, German chauvinism and racial prejudice had led to an unjustifiable neglect of Yiddish. Most studies of Yiddish are by Jews or missionaries. Kloss argued that the ‘Yiddish question’ was not one of dialectological interest; it was about the competition between the *Kultursprachen* for ‘space’ and ‘intensity’. Kloss also noted that ignorance of Yiddish on the German side had not been matched by the Jews, who had

even in the nineteenth century had a Germanizing movement within Yiddish language politics. Kloss described Yiddish as a source of support for German, even mentioning the possibility of a combined school-system in some areas (1930: 9). He cites the links that must exist in the American trade-union movement; the leaders of the previous generation were often Germans; those of the current one, Jews (1930: 9). Kloss also mentioned the Yiddish periodical *The Jewish Farmer*, and argued that the possibilities for German–Jewish co-operation were unlimited. Kloss argued for example that the proposed German institute of higher learning in South America should have courses on German for Jews and Yiddish for Germans and lectures in agriculture and business for Yiddish-speakers and advanced German-learners of Yiddish (1930: 9), though he admitted that it was unlikely that the institute would realize such a plan. Perhaps more practically, both Yiddish-speaking Jews and Germans should acquire the passive knowledge of the other language, and some Yiddish publications could be produced in Latin letters. This would of course necessitate standardizing Yiddish, but the dialectal differences were relatively minor and these would in any case survive in the spoken language. Kloss compared the case of Yiddish with that of Dzhudezmo or Ladino, a language loosely definable as the variety of Spanish spoken by Sephardic Jews. The Spanish government has attempted to reclaim Dzhudezmo speakers as in some sense being ‘overseas Spanish’. Such a policy with regard to Yiddish speakers would not be feasible, given the greater linguistic distance between German and Yiddish, and also given the greater racial difference between German speakers and Yiddish speakers. Given that Yiddish is not the language of any state and Yiddish speakers cannot be considered the overseas speakers of a national language (which in some sense the Dzhudezmo speakers are), this is not something which can be handled as a matter of state policy.

Kloss’ 1930 article represents perhaps the high-point of the tenuous German tradition of regarding Yiddish speakers as potential or partial members of what could be termed ‘German civilization’.²⁰ Kloss however stressed both the linguistic and the racial distance that separated Yiddish speakers from Germans, and it is unclear under what conditions and to whose ultimate benefit the proposed co-operation and co-ordination would take place. He clearly had in mind also some kind of exchange of talents, that the overseas Jews and the Germans will complement and even train each other, the Jews with their intellectual and financial skills (while Kloss was aware that many Jews earned their living from the land, he noted that the Eastern European Jews were unusual in having such a high proportion of ‘intellectual workers’ in their midst, 1930: 7), the Germans with their more practical agricultural (and perhaps industrial) abilities. Conspicuously absent from this article is any discussion of German-speaking Jewry. After the Nazi take-over, in a review of Schmidt-Rohr’s *Mutter Sprache*, Kloss stated that, just as the Negro could not be considered an American, and the Haitian was not French, so – in spite of the bond of language –

the German Jew was not now to be considered part of the German people (Kloss 1934: 130).²¹

There is no reason to attribute insincerity to this advocacy of Yiddish studies. Equally, however, one can see an intellectual continuity with Kloss' writings in the National Socialist period, and there is no reason to attribute insincerity to those later writings either.

Nothing came of the proposal for an institute, and subsequently Birnbaum took the initiative and send out a letter appealing for support. Among the distinguished scholars who gave their backing were Otto Behaghel (Giessen), Helmut de Boor (Bern), Albert Debrunner (Jena), Theodor Frings (Leipzig), Alfred Götze (Giessen), Paul Kretschmer (Wien), Friedrich Maurer (Erlangen), John Meier (Freiburg I. Br.), Friedrich Panzer (Heidelberg), Theodor Siebs (Breslau), Wolfgang Stammer (Greifswald) and Max Vasmer (Berlin). Friedrich Panzer noted in his reply that he had included Yiddish in his seminar on German dialects at the University of Heidelberg in the previous winter semester. Birnbaum had explained the rationale for such an institute as follows:

Yiddish, once the language of the Jews of Germany, today that of their descendants outside the territory of the German language, is a subject for research, not merely within the framework of general Jewish studies but of general and comparative linguistics and literature, for Hebraic and – particularly – Germanic studies. Thus, e.g., Old Yiddish manuscripts constitute a welcome additional source of material from times when not overmuch is available in German itself. Because of the difference in alphabet, these documents provide valuable assistance towards clarifying phonological problems in the history of early German.

(translated in Birnbaum 1972: 245)

Hitler's accession to power put a final end to the plan. Birnbaum left Germany not long after, and taught in London until 1958, before emigrating to Canada (Hiley 1991).

Jechiel Fischer

Jechiel Fischer (subsequently Jechiel Bin-Nun) was a doctoral student at Heidelberg working under Professor Friedrich Panzer during the years 1933 and 1934. Fischer was from Rohatyn in East Galicia, and had been assigned the topic of the relation of Yiddish to the German dialects in the course of studies in the *Deutsches Seminar*. The thesis consisted of a general introduction and a detailed investigation of the relationship between the Yiddish sound-system and the German dialects. An extract of his dissertation was published in 1936, and Fischer spent the next two years working on a revision of the text. Fischer left Germany for Palestine in 1938 and subsequently

published a revised edition of the full dissertation (Fischer 1936, as Bin-Nun 1973; see also Strauch 1990: 95–100). In the 1973 edition Fischer recalls that the first section of the thesis, the ‘general part’, was published as a dissertation in Germany in 1936, but that the expanded version of this first section could not appear as a book as planned because of the prevailing political circumstances. It was to have been published by Schocken.

Fischer shares with the discipline of Yiddish linguistics a concern with the geographical origin of Yiddish, the names for Yiddish, and the prospects for the future of Yiddish. These questions were of course linked, and what underlay them all was the search for an understanding of the causal origin of Yiddish.

Fischer, following Güdemann, argued that the Jews of the Rheinland spoke ‘French’ as their mother-tongue until the thirteenth century, and that they only gradually switched over to German. Since they designated their mother-tongue as *laas* (Loez, a term they had brought with them from Italy which designated originally the language of the foreigner, i.e. Italian) and had naturalized it in this role to mean ‘French’, they used the term *loshn ashkenaz* (‘language of Ashkenaz’, i.e. Germany) to designate German. In some contexts, *leshoneynu* (‘our language’) might designate ‘French’, in another ‘German’, depending on whether it was used in the Rheinland or not. These Jews were the centre of Jewish culture in Germany (1973: 27).

From this period, argues Fischer, stem the small number of Romance etymons in the Yiddish vocabulary, the Yiddish plural *s*, and a feature of Yiddish spelling, the silent final *aleph* which survived to the fifteenth century and beyond (1973: 28, 41). Fischer emphasizes religion as the mark of Jewish separateness, but insists that there is no reason to assume this led immediately to a distinct form of German once Jews had adopted it (1973: 21, 38–40). Fischer however regards a new linguistic phase as having begun in the ninth century, with the introduction of Hebrew words into German through trade (Hebrew being the Jewish lingua franca for commercial communication), and in view of the existence of a separate Jewish legal system.

Later terms from Bible translations and liturgy entered the speech of the Jews, part of an upsurge in Jewish religious life from the eleventh century. This second linguistic phase is marked by the acceptance of both Romance and Hebrew elements. In other words there was a (largely unconscious) tendency to distinctiveness, although the foundation remained in German (1973: 31). The speech of the Jews grew together organically with the German dialects, and its sound system and grammar changed ‘automatically’ as they changed (1973: 32). This phase then is characterized by a slight modification of German, German with a Jewish colouring (‘ein jüdisch gefärbtes Deutsch’), a form of speech that cannot be characterized as an independent language (1973: 32).

The third phase from the thirteenth century onwards brought the emergence of a separate

Jewish German. It was in this period that persecution and the Black Death drove Jews eastwards or transformed voluntary Jewish quarters into compulsory ghettos. Jews lived in a 'world of their own'. The new mobility and enforced social compactness brought about dialect levelling among the Jews, and a new superdialectal and unitary variety was created. Jewish features of the language became particularly important in these times of stress, and speakers took refuge in particular Hebrew expressions that expressed their distinctiveness from the hostile world. The Hebrew vocabulary items that were in use before now become 'organically fused' into the new language of daily life (1973: 34–5). The late Middle High German dialect sound changes are the last to be automatically followed; the speech of the Jews follows some not others, it unconsciously 'selects'. This is the first phase in which we can speak of linguistic independence; although the speech of the Jews was still under the influence of German dialects that influence no longer functioned automatically. Reconstruction from present-day Yiddish cannot reach back past this phase (1973: 38). At the close of this proto-Yiddish phase is the split between West and East Yiddish, with the development of a new variety of Yiddish in the Slavic speaking lands.

One question that arises is why the Jews who migrated eastwards did not assimilate into Slavic-speaking Jewish society. Fischer gives three reasons. Firstly, the migration was large scale; secondly, the towns of Eastern Europe were predominantly German-speaking. As Fischer noted in reference to the modern period, Jews would often have a knowledge of German for trading purposes, even if German was not the language of the majority of the non-Jews amongst whom they lived (1973: 151). In addition, the Jews who migrated remained in touch with Germany. In the end the linguistic struggle in Poland (*Sprachenkampf*) ended in victory for the migrants over the locals. Fischer presents this as a struggle between two forces, and the victory for the one, Yiddish, did not leave it unchanged (1973: 49).

Fischer sees variation in Yiddish primarily as a reflection of the influence of outside forces. In some periods, Jews are forced in on one another and levelling takes place; against this, contacts they have with co-territorial non-Jewish languages cause geographical or regional varieties to spring up. With the decline of West Yiddish and the effects of the Enlightenment and the *Haskalah*, Jews in the West began increasingly to employ New High German, especially in writing; in the East literary Yiddish took on new life and vigour, as the consciousness of possessing a separate language was stronger than in the West (1973: 56).

The Jewish sense of religion had been extended in the course of the Middle Ages and after, to include everything that distinguished Jews from non-Jews. The more different something was, the more 'Jewish'. Yiddish itself came to be valued as a wall protecting religion, and hence itself part of the religious sphere. The differential attitudes and confidence in Yiddish explain the decline of West Yiddish and the survival of East Yiddish (1973: 57). Fischer notes that linguistic

purism in the East is now dedicated to fighting the influence of New High German, seen not as a refining influence, but as a coarsening. It has now justifiably been recognized that Yiddish has a character or essence of its own (1973: 60–1).

In discussing the origin and nature of Yiddish, Fischer reviewed the terms with which it has been designated, rejecting terms like *Judendeutsch* and *Jüdischdeutsch* as inappropriate for the modern language as they suggest that Yiddish is ‘completely dependent on German’ and that Yiddish followed German in its development (1973: 17). In addition to dismissing ‘Jargon’ and *Mauschelei* as pejorative labels (1973: 20), Fischer notes that the term *mame-loshn* (‘mother-tongue’) should not be seen as the actual name of the language, even though it is widely used in Yiddish speaking circles. It is, rather, a humorously indirect designation.

The term ‘yiddish’ itself came from the United States, from the English transcription for the ethnographic term *jüdisch*, and its use avoids the implication of ‘jüdisch’ that we are dealing with the national language of the Jews. This problem came to the fore when the Zionist movement declared Hebrew to be the national language, thereby expressing consciously something that had always been in the unconscious of the Jewish people (1973: 18).

Fischer assumes that there was a degree of reluctance on the part of Jews to absorb Hebrew into their daily language, and that in the early stages the number of items borrowed would not have exceeded the number in the speech of German Jews today (i.e. the 1930s). In short, the Jews of the early period spoke German much as their gentile neighbours did, with slight differences that did not amount to a separate ‘Jewish dialect’. The chief difference was the script (1973: 24).

Fischer insists that we cannot explain the origin of Yiddish by one single factor, be that religion (Birnbaum, Mises) or migration from Germany (1973: 73ff.). However Fischer does put more emphasis on the religion than on other factors, arguing however that it only came fully into play once the economic, social and political stage had been set. He speaks of the Hebrew language as a kind of cultural reserve, to be drawn on in times of need. This reserve eventually merged into Yiddish.

Yiddish, according to Fischer, had from the beginning a tendency to develop as a more elevated kind of language. In part, this was due to its super-dialectal character and the levelling and polishing that occurred as Jews used Yiddish for social, political, cultural and religious exchange. Jews were in contact with the courts and high officials of their places of residence and had therefore to be acquainted with the appropriate high style. Fischer also makes the point that Jews were in the later period exclusively urban, and that Yiddish is literally a child of the town. Yiddish thus lacks the free and uninhibited character of the broad dialect features of the German dialects. In fact the New High German written norm had a more direct influence on Yiddish speakers, even those in the East, than on the speakers of German dialects.

Fischer concludes that contemporary Yiddish stands between what is generally termed a 'dialect' and a written, literary or 'high' language. It possesses fully neither the fine smoothness ('feine Glätte') of a 'high' language, nor the coarse naturalness of a dialect; put another way, it has the sensuous immediacy of the dialect as well as the harmonic proportionality of the high language. It is an 'elevated dialect' or a 'folkish high language' (1973: 85). In discussion of the nature of written Yiddish, Fischer argues that the gap between written Yiddish and the Yiddish dialects is much less than in German. Yiddish in effect does not have an intermediate register that corresponds to German *Umgangssprache*.

In any consideration of the relationship of language to territory, the status of so-called colonial dialects outside the 'heartland' is crucial. Fischer (1973: 59) describes the 'colonial dialects' of Yiddish in United States and elsewhere in terms of a lack of organic unity. The variety and diversity to be found in the Yiddish of the United States was that of an inorganic mixture. He draws a distinction between the Yiddish heartland (*Stammgebiet*) and the *Kolonialland* (1973: 85). The levelling process between dialects is described as leading everywhere to a *Konglomerat* (1973: 106–10). The character of 'colonial' Yiddish is everywhere the same, a uniformity of disharmony (1973: 108). This raises the question of how these colonial dialects are to be differentiated from East Yiddish itself, since, by Fischer's own account, dialect mixing played a key role in the formation of Yiddish as a separate language from German. Comparing heartland Yiddish to colonial Yiddish, Fischer wrote as follows:

In the former case we have a process of looking from the diversity of the whole to the unity of the individual; in the latter from the diversity of the individual to the unity of the whole. In the first case the differentiated nature of unity; in the second the combination of the diverse. In the former case we have a small, bounded area with many, but unitary forms of the language; in the latter a single, but mixed type over an endless, unbounded area.

(1973: 108)

Part of the 'diverse unity' of the colonial dialects is the mixing of the various heartland dialects, which will vary from location to location. Furthermore, the impact of the co-territorial national language always takes effect in the same way, even if it obviously results in diversity (since Yiddish in America will be influenced by English, and Yiddish in Russia by Russian). Fischer asks rhetorically whether these colonial forms of Yiddish will ever develop into dialects, whether we will ever have New York Yiddish alongside Pinsk Yiddish. His conclusion is that this depends on the future of Yiddish, and whether Yiddish will survive the many generations necessary to create such new varieties.

While, when cut up by the philologist's dissecting knife, Yiddish appears to be made up of many different components, it, like English, does not appear to its speakers as in any way strange. The components are organically combined, and they cease to be 'German', 'Hebrew', or 'Slavic' and become Yiddish (1973: 123). This suggests that there is a distinction between the linguist's view and that of the native speaker. The latter does not feel any hybridity, nor is there any diminution of a sense that the language is a natural unity. However Fischer also wants to say that native speakers of Yiddish possess an (unconscious) respect for the Hebrew component, that this component is less often combined with prefixes and suffixes from the German and Slavic resources of the language. In other words, the Hebrew component is to a degree psychologically distinct or discrete (1973: 122).

Fischer painted what was (from a Yiddishist point of view) a depressing picture of linguistic assimilation, arguing that once Yiddish has become detached from its religious function it is vulnerable to replacement by the national language. In addition to these 'natural factors', there are the effects on the language situation that follow from political pressures and ideas. For example, the rise of Zionism has made Hebrew and Yiddish competitors (1973: 161). Zionism however, notes Fischer, cannot be effective against the linguistic assimilation going on in Europe; nor will it have any effect one way or the other on the struggle between Yiddish and the national languages (1973: 164–5). While Yiddishism can have some impact, it cannot rival religion in its totalizing nature, and much depends on the policies of the respective national governments. Yiddishism does not create a wall between the Jews and the surrounding world, it cannot create a barrier to assimilation in the same way that religion could (1973: 166).

Considering the future of Yiddish, Fischer remarks that no one can predict the way history will develop, though the writing is clearly on the wall for West Yiddish and Courland Yiddish. These varieties are moribund, and incapable of supporting a literature and a culture (1973: 167). The situation in the heartland and in the new areas of settlement overseas is more complex. The colonial dialects are dependent on the heartland for new infusions of energy. In the United States, the most vibrant centre of colonial Yiddish, the prognosis is not good (1973: 168): 'Aside from Yiddishists who act in an ideologically conscious way one can therefore assume that in a few generations Yiddish will have come to an end as far as the Jewish masses are concerned'. In Palestine Yiddish does have some vitality, because the 'extreme Orthodox' regard the use of Hebrew in daily life as blasphemy. In addition, Palestine is the only country which could accept a mass immigration from Europe, and the majority of those immigrants would be Yiddish speakers. Thus one could expect Yiddish to survive for a considerable time in Palestine, though in the long run it must give way to Hebrew. Fischer is in general pessimistic about the prospects for Yiddish in the heartland of Yiddish, arguing that its use is increasingly less a matter of course.

Fischer saw the situation as looking brightest in the Soviet Union, where the government sees in Yiddish one of the national languages and Yiddishism as a weapon against clericalism and ‘reaction’ (1973: 171–2). However in the broader picture Bolshevism is using Yiddish merely as the means to an end, rather than an object for cultivation. Ultimately, communism is an assimilationist ideology. Yiddishism itself may well follow a particular path in future, that of the radical de-Hebraization that has triumphed in the Soviet Union. This movement within Yiddishism, which might well take the moderate Yiddishists along with it since they would no longer be in touch with the traditionally minded Jewish masses, might well end in Yiddish losing its Jewish character: ‘Yiddish would cease to be Jewish’ (1973: 172). But, concluded Fischer, no one can really know what fate has in store for Yiddish, since Yiddish is at the mercy of powerful and complex forces. Who can say how political developments will affect the Jews of Europe and what new ideologies will arise among the Jews? What will be the fate of the European Jews? It is the answers to these questions that will determine the future of Yiddish.

Yiddish studies and German scholars

It is a striking fact that many of the German facilitators of Yiddish studies in the inter-war period became members of the NSDAP or evinced strong pro-Nazi sympathies. Professor Conrad Borchling (1872–1946), who encouraged Solomon Birnbaum at the University of Hamburg, joined the NSDAP in 1933 (Maas 1994: 269). Wirrer compares Borchling to Pastor Christian Boeck and argues that his party membership notwithstanding, Borchling’s view of language belonged to the philological and to the national-conservative tradition, rather than partaking of the National Socialist world view. The non-party member Boeck was much more evidently in tune with the National Socialists and their racial theories (Wirrer 1994: 245–6).²² Among those who signed a letter in support of Birnbaum’s proposal for a Yiddish institute there were at least two future Nazi activists and members of the NSDAP, Helmut de Boor²³ and Friedrich Maurer. Heinz Kloss joined the NSDAP in 1940 (see Chapter 6). Walther Mitzka, whose *Sprachatlas des Deutschen Reiches* had considerable influence on Yiddish linguistics, was a Nazi party member. Max Weinreich studied with Ferdinand Wrede, the founder of the atlas, in Marburg in the early 1920s (Althaus 1969: 90), and Wrede was one of many prominent *Germanisten* who signed the pledge of allegiance to Hitler in 1933 (*Bekennnis* 1933).²⁴ Leopold Schnitzler’s Prague dissertation (1922) was supervised by the National Socialist Erich Gierach. Gierach later declared in the pages of *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* that ‘the claim of the German people to the Sudetenland was older than that of any Slavic tribe’ (1938a: 681), since the Germans had arrived 500 years earlier (1938b). Gierach’s life’s work was guided by the slogan ‘We want that what is German remains German, and what was German becomes German’.²⁵

Fischer's research was carried on in Germany at the University of Heidelberg after the seizure of power by the Nazis and his teacher, Friedrich Panzer, was, like Borchling, what is euphemistically referred to as a 'nationalist conservative'; Jansen (1993: 388) classifies him as 'authoritarian—old conservative'. Panzer was a member of the editorial committee of the 'exponentially racist' journal *Volk und Rasse* which first appeared in 1926, published by J.F. Lehmann (Lixfeld 1994: 17), and of *Euphorion* when it became *Dichtung und Volkstum* in 1934. Although in retirement, Panzer attended a conference in Weimar in July 1940 to discuss the role of Germanists in the war effort (Reiss 1973: 133).²⁶

Recognized scholars who published works on Yiddish in the Nazi period included Franz J. Beranek, Lutz Mackensen and Peter-Heinz Seraphim.

Franz Beranek

Beranek (1902–69) was a consistent proponent of the notion that Yiddish studies fall primarily within *Germanistik*. Beranek's interest in Yiddish dated from the late 1920s, and it culminated in his appointment to a chair in Yiddish at the University of Giessen in 1961. His inaugural address in May 1961 was entitled 'Deutsche und Jiddische Philologie' (Beranek 1961a, Althaus 1972: 1351). The notion of a former member of the NSDAP and SA being appointed to teach Yiddish at a German University in the 1960s might seem to stretch credulity, but the basic facts are in the public domain. In a brief summary of Beranek's career written in the late 1950s, Max Weinreich pointed out that Beranek had collaborated with the Hitler-regime, and that the Yivo would have nothing to do with him. While Beranek had expressed a desire for reconciliation, his works still reeked of the Hitler-years (M. Weinreich 1958: 172n).²⁷ Uriel Weinreich indicated Beranek's membership of the Nazi party in a terse footnote (1964: 248n). A fairly detailed *curriculum vitae* of Beranek can be gleaned from the files of NSD-Dozentenbund, one of several organizations with a finger in the pie of university appointments and promotions.²⁸

A letter from Dr Borger of the NSD-Dozentenbund to the party office in Munich dated 15 October 1942 set out Beranek's career in some detail. It was basically the portrait of a school teacher with scholarly ambitions, one who had achieved his *Promotion* in Prague in 1932 and continued to produce a remarkable number of scholarly publications in spite of a heavy teaching load as a secondary school teacher. Beranek had been recognized for his contributions to the study of the history of German settlement in Slovakia and the Carpathians, and was currently on leave from his teaching duties and in charge of the Institut für Heimatforschung in Kásmark (Zips). Borger described Beranek as confident, even self-assured, and as politically irreproachable. He had been a member of the akademischer Germanistenverein in Vienna in his student days, the

most radical nationalistic combat unit (*Kampfverband*) of that time.²⁹ Later Beranek became a member of the German gymnastics association (deutscher Turnverband). He joined the NSDAP on 1 November 1938 (No. 6584272) and became a Scharführer (staff sergeant) and press officer in the SA.³⁰

This evaluation was in connection with the appointment of a (supernumerary) professor for the folklore and genealogy of Moravia at the University of Prague. Beranek's rival for the position was Dr Josef Hanika, a member of the Sudetendeutsche Partei (Lixfeld 1994: 248).³¹ Beranek successfully obtained the position, thereby making the leap from the secondary to tertiary level. After the war Beranek made the transition again, moving in 1962 from secondary school teaching in Hessen to the post at the University of Giessen.

During the war Beranek enjoyed quite a wide circle of contacts in Germany, in particular with Heinz Kloss in Stuttgart and the Ahnenerbe. The founding of the Institut für Heimatforschung in Käsmark in Slovakia on 9 January 1941, had been marked by a conference attended by scholars including Kloss of the Deutsches Ausland-Institut. Kloss subsequently wrote to the Reichsführung-SS on 5 February 1941, suggesting co-operation with the new institute.³² This institute was an organ of the Deutsche Partei in Slovakia, and had the party emblem (swastika in a shield) on its letter-head. On 25 and 26 March Kloss met Studienrat Dr Helmut Fluhme, a representative of the Deutsche Akademie section on linguistic purism (*Sprachpflege*) in Pressburg, and raised with him the possibility that Beranek could be employed by the Akademie as a lector in Käsmark, thus enabling him to help in the setting up of the new institute. Kloss also met a Dr Friedl of the Deutsche Partei and discussed the roles of Frau Margarethe Urban and Beranek at the new institute. Kloss reported that Friedl, who knew Beranek personally, was agreeable to his suggestion that he should be employed as a lector.³³ Kloss subsequently wrote to Fluhme (10 April 1941) informing him that Professor Gierach had employed Beranek to do dialect research in Zips during the summer, a good sign that Beranek was a suitable candidate.³⁴ Kloss and Beranek met in Stuttgart on Tuesday, 17 March; Beranek was interested in learning more about the DAI.³⁵ The relationship between Kloss and Beranek resulted in Kloss publishing Beranek's study of modern German settlements in the Czech language area in his journal *Volksforschung* (Beranek 1942).³⁶

A letter from Sievers of the Ahnenerbe to the institute, dated 7 March 1941, promised co-operation in a number of areas, particularly in pre-history, folklore and linguistics. Dr and Frau (Hertha Wolf) Beranek later visited the Ahnenerbe, according to a memo by Sievers dated 24 March 1942. Frau Beranek was involved in the study of fairy-tales in Moravia; Beranek was taking over the leadership of the institute, and had come to the Ahnenerbe to ask for advice to and to seek areas of co-operation. Sievers noted that the Beraneks had asked whether the Ahnenerbe's folklore data gathering was to be extended to Slovakia, and he had replied that the scope of the

Atlas of German folklore could now be widened to areas which had previously been off-limits for political reasons. A letter from Sievers to Wolfram in Vienna followed, setting up the link with Beranek (dated 28 March 1942).³⁷

A report by the institute's first director, Johann Lipták, dated 20 July 1942, recorded that Beranek had been on secondment to the institute since 1 April 1942, and that he was in charge of archives and data collection with respect to the Carpathian Germans and Germans in Slovakia as a whole. He was also in charge of collecting materials on the topic of 'The German loan-word in Slovakian', and the study of the Carpathian-German dialects and place and family names. He noted the strong links with the Deutsches Ausland-Institut in Stuttgart in the area of genealogical research, and that both Professor Heinrich Harmjanz and Professor Hans R.G. Günther had held talks there.

Beranek's contacts with the Ahnenerbe stood him in good stead when he applied for a position at the University of Prague. Richard Wolfram wrote to Sievers on 29 August 1942 telling him that he had been informed by the NSD-Dozentenbund that Beranek was a candidate in Prague, and that Beranek had written to him asking him to intercede on his behalf with Professor Heinrich Harmjanz. He noted that he had known Beranek from the radical nationalist *Germanistenverein* in Vienna. Wolfram was critical of Hanika in a letter to Sievers dated 10 September 1942, on the grounds that Hanika had declined to work with the Ahnenerbe. Beranek would be a better prospect for a employment by the Ahnenerbe.³⁸

Beranek had been active in Yiddish and Jewish studies since the 1930s, attending the second international conference of the Yivo in Vilnius in 1935 where he presented a paper on Yiddish in Czechoslovakia (Beranek 1936a). In a short article published in 1931 Beranek had argued that Jewish folklore in Czechoslovakia was being unjustly neglected, even by Jewish scholars who tended to focus on history and cultural history. Most non-Jewish scholars know something about Jewish culture and language, though this is often gleaned from anti-Jewish jokes and anecdotes. These stories are those

through which we ventilate our centuries-old aversion for the dogged upward striving, superficially so unheroic, of this Jewish people who are so foreign to us. Arrogance, contempt and, in recent times, political hatred have prevented the non-Jewish folklorist from separating these many details, familiar to him and to each non-Jewish lay person, from their aura of disdainful ridicule to see them for what they are: the expression of a distinct people, with whom we have, incidentally, already lived for hundreds of years under one roof, so to speak.

(1931: 119–20)

This point of view, which Beranek characterizes as the only academically respectable one, reveals that Jewish society is highly differentiated, even in those areas where the chief Jewish occupation is in trade and business (*Handel*). However in the eastern areas of Czechoslovakia Jews follow a diverse set of occupations and trades, and there are still substantial folkloric elements to be studied in Jewish society; and the Yiddish language is of especial interest. This language, the history of which conceals many secrets, has developed into a literary language in Eastern Europe and in North America; in the West Yiddish has declined in favour of German and Czech, though it still survives among some of the older generation. Beranek expressed surprise that Jewish scholars had neglected Jewish folklore, which he defined as the ‘product of the encounter of Jewish religious traditions with the non-Jewish environment’ (1931: 120–1). This encounter is seen both in customs and in the Yiddish language, which represents an important source for the history of German, particularly Sudeten German, and a clue to the reconstruction of place names and the like. It is therefore high time that German and Czech scholars devote themselves to the study of Jewish folklore. In this way they will both distance themselves from the accusation that they are prejudiced, and they can also draw great profit from scholarly work on the folklore of their own people (1931: 121).

Here, the pursuit of objective scholarly standards does not then involve the rejection of prejudice *per se*; rather it commits the scholar to a different discourse, one which can serve as an alibi against accusations of prejudice, and which can contribute to a fuller account of ‘our’ history by viewing the foreign culture as an integrated cultural system, rather than through the distorting lens of popular anti-Semitism.

In his discussion of German dialects in southern Moravia, Beranek (1936b) noted the migration of Jews from small towns and villages into the larger urban centres: ‘Places with over 10 percent Jews have now become a rarity’. Nonetheless, argued Beranek, the Jews are important because until recently they spoke a ‘special German idiom’, i.e. Yiddish. Yiddish has not had much impact on the spoken German of the region (except for Misslitzern and Lundenburgern, where people say that the language has the particular intonation of Yiddish, the so-called *jüdeln*). There is however a trading language which contains many words which derive from Yiddish, though these have not penetrated the dialects proper to any significant degree (1936b: 8).

The major work on Yiddish produced by Beranek during the war was a study of Yiddish in north-east Hungary (1941). This was published with support from the Reichsinstitut für die Geschichte des Neuen Deutschlands, and in his foreword (dateline Tetschen, May 1940) Beranek thanks both the institute and its director, Walter Frank.³⁹ Walter Frank (1905–45) and Professor Karl Alexander von Müller had inaugurated the institute on 19 November 1936 at Munich University. Frank’s attempt to dominate Jewish studies eventually foundered in the face of competition from Rosenberg’s rival Institut der NSDAP zur Erforschung der Judenfrage.⁴⁰

Beranek's Foreword proclaims the relevance of the study of Yiddish for an understanding of the Jewish question in the 'the new Germany'. While the role of Jews in the economic and spiritual-intellectual life of the world's nations is being defined with increasing clarity, there is little understanding of the Jews in terms of their identity as a people or *Volk*, i.e. in their racial and cultural distinctiveness (1941: 5). Within the diversity of Jewish languages Yiddish is to be seen as the primary or racially distinctive linguistic expression of the Jews, 'die arteigene Sprache des heutigen Judentums'. The Yiddish language is the Jewish language *par excellence*. While the study of Yiddish is important for the discipline of Jewish studies ('die Wissenschaft des Judentums'), it is perhaps of greater consequence for *Deutschkunde*, particularly German linguistics. Yiddish, along with Dutch and Afrikaans, is basically a language peripheral to High German ('eine Nebensprache des Hochdeutschen', 1941: 6; the term is from Kloss), with its origins in thirteenth century Germany. It offers a rich source for historical linguistics, dialectology, onomastics and toponymics. Yiddish, with its unique external and inner structure, is of great importance for the discipline of linguistics as a whole: 'Not only the pragmatically motivated economic or cultural historian but also the general linguist, especially, as noted above, the German specialist (*Deutschkundler*), has in consequence the greatest of interest in a thorough investigation of Yiddish' (1941: 6). Almost all of the studies hitherto made of Yiddish have been carried out by Jewish scholars, and they raise more questions than they are capable of answering. The major source of problems has been the neglect of West Yiddish, which stands in the same relation to East Yiddish as the dialects of the old Germanic tribes stand to those of the new (1941: 6). For Beranek, there is a clear parallel between the development of German and the development of Yiddish, one that, given the fundamentally German nature of Yiddish, allows for the application of the research methods of German linguistics (1941: 7). Beranek proposes a dialect atlas for the whole Yiddish speech area ('von Amsterdam bis Rostow und von Reval bis Venedig'). A start has been made by L. Vilenkin's atlas of Yiddish in the Soviet Union (1931). This project should go hand in hand with detailed monographs on particular areas, concentrating particularly on the sound-systems in the well-established manner of research into German. Existing studies of Yiddish (by Gerzon, Löwe, Birnbaum and Mieses) have as their object a hypothetical interdialectal written Yiddish, which has no parallel unified spoken form.

For Beranek, Yiddish emerges here as primarily a geographically diverse form of folk speech, in need of detailed monographic research as a tool for *Germanistik*. His point of view contrasts then with that of Ernst Krieck, for whom Jews are a people 'without a national language, without territory, without living space, without a state', whose natural form of social organization was the ghetto (1933d). Clearly the study of Yiddish dialects implies the geographical patterning of Yiddish; in this sense it sets up a relationship between Jews and territory. However the status of

Yiddish within Beranek's work remains unclear. Just as English is to be seen as a Germanic language, in spite of its Romance, Celtic and other elements, so Yiddish is, viewed purely linguistically, a German dialect (1941: 13). Consequently the study takes as its object primarily the Germanic component in Yiddish, which Beranek defines as including those words of non-Germanic origin found in German as a whole. The main point of comparison, as with German dialect studies, is the vowel system of Middle High German. The Hebrew–Aramaic component of Yiddish is compared to the classical Hebrew form, though Beranek notes that in future studies later forms should be used, i.e. those of the Ashkenazic pronunciation in the Middle High German and Early High German period, themselves not uninfluenced by Middle High German (1941: 13). It is not always clear to which Slavic language the Slavic elements in Yiddish – which entered Yiddish relatively late – should be related (1941: 14).

This attitude to Yiddish, which Beranek modified to some extent in his post-war writings (see for example his comments on Yiddish as 'a thoroughly modern language of culture', 1955c: 767), places the language and its speakers in a curious twilight, neither German nor non-German. Yiddish is neither a full German dialect nor a language. Beranek implicitly dismisses the idea of standard or literary Yiddish as a myth of Yiddish linguistics.

After the war, driven out from Czechoslovakia along with the German population, Beranek found employment as a teacher in Hessen, but sought to revive his academic career through the advocacy of the importance of Yiddish studies. The main instrument to that end was the founding of a bulletin for Yiddish studies and an association of interested scholars (*Mitteilungen aus dem Arbeitskreis für Jiddistik*). The *Mitteilungen* appeared between 1955 and 1964. Beranek also continued to publish material prepared and researched before or during the war, receiving support from the Ministry of the Interior after 1952 to take leave from his duties as a school-teacher (1955b: 7).

In 1941 Beranek had made it clear that he regarded himself as the first to approach the study of Yiddish in a scientifically correct manner, and this tone was maintained in his post-war writings. He seemed to have viewed himself as the scholar most able to mediate between the world of Yiddish scholarship and the more advanced worlds of general linguistics and *Germanistik*. Yiddish studies, Beranek wrote in 1955, are in a precarious state both inside and outside Germany, and circumstances have placed him in a position of leadership, consciousness of which requires him to undertake both detailed monograph studies and surveys of the field (1955b: 4). Beranek also viewed his undertaking as a contribution to the normalization of relations between the German and Jewish peoples (1955a: 1–3); however in this he was destined to be disappointed.

In his study of the differential impact of Slavic on Yiddish and German in Eastern Europe Uriel Weinreich makes the following observation:

At its worst, in the hands of German Nazis (e.g. Schier 1938), the study of the eastern diaspora was a platform for the proclamation of alleged German superiority or a tool for activating language enclaves as outposts in the imminent onslaught on the East. The student in search of facts has the distasteful job of wading through a vast morass of pseudo-scholarship by Hitler's professors and the 'ex-' Nazis of today who sanguinely anticipated the planned massacre of Jews and other victims, or who shrug it off in retrospect as an accident of war.

(1958: 3n)

Bruno Schier's name crops up again in the introduction to Beranek's delayed work on the Yiddish of Pinsk, and as one of the new friends of the *Mitteilungen* in 1957.⁴¹

In the introduction to his study of Pinsk Yiddish, Beranek explains that a study of Yiddish in the Sudetenland had been lost at the end of the war as a consequence of his *Heimatvertreibung* (1958: 2). The manuscript of the study of Pinsk had been completed in 1943, and eventually restored to the author in 1948 thanks to the intercession of Professor Bruno Schier of the University of Münster. Beranek does not describe the difficulties that required the assistance of the professor. The manuscript had been based on field work carried out in Pinsk in 1935, but Beranek supplemented that research by, as he puts it, taking advantage of the not-to-be-missed opportunity offered by the presence of Jews living as Displaced Persons in Germany after the war (1958: 2–3).

Schier's is not the only 'compromised' name to occur in Beranek's post-war writings. In his article on Yiddish in Slovakia, Beranek cites Peter Heinz Seraphim (1938) on the demographics of Jews in Eastern Europe (on Seraphim, see below); in a discussion of the boundary between West and East Yiddish, Beranek argues that the linguistic boundary reflects an ethnic dividing line within the European Jews. This boundary exists despite the communalities of race, religion, culture, etc., and in the footnotes H.F.K. Günther's *Rassenkunde des jüdischen Volkes* is cited as an authority (Beranek 1949: 27, 37). This boundary, Beranek argues, runs between an enlightened, progressive and internationalist Western Jewry and a conservative, tradition-minded Eastern Jewry. Uriel Weinreich comments (1964: 256n): 'We consider this theory, which embellishes [Jechiel] Fischer's tentative formulation with facts taken largely from Nazi sources, to be highly oversimplified.'

In his study of Yiddish in Franconia Beranek conceded the Yiddishist point that reconstruction should be made with reference to proto-Yiddish ('Urjiddisch') rather than to Middle High German. This term, defined as he points out by analogy to 'proto-Germanic', 'proto-Slavic', etc. should not however mislead us into thinking that Yiddish originated as a single, autonomous language.

The Jews resident on German-speaking territory spoke, claims Beranek, initially the same German as the surrounding population, some lexical mixing aside. This state of affairs changed over time due to the cross-regional trading links and cultural unity of the Jews, leading to a levelling among the different varieties of German. With movement eastwards and developing social independence this 'pre-Yiddish' became Yiddish proper by the first half of the fourteenth century (1961b: 274).

Beranek (1964) defined *Jiddistik* as the newest branch of Germanic studies and was critical of Siegmund Wolf's decision to concentrate on the Germanic component of Yiddish in his dictionary: 'it is as if someone wanted to write an English dictionary leaving out the Norman-Romance elements of the language' (1964: 194). Wolf, who had been one of the early contributors to the *Mitteilungen*, is criticized for presenting a fictional normalized Yiddish, one abstracted from variations of time and space and which was spoken nowhere by no one. Yiddish taken as a whole is not a unified language (1964: 194). By this Beranek meant that Yiddish is divided primarily into an older West Yiddish and a newer East Yiddish, the latter itself divided into north and southern Yiddish. The literary language is based on northern Yiddish (1964: 194–5). Whether this denial of the unity of Yiddish makes it a special case is not clear; what Beranek asserts of Yiddish could be said *mutatis mutandis* of any language.

Beranek closed down the *Mitteilungen* in 1964, citing his university obligations as a cause. But a controversy had arisen over his war record, one alluded to in the *Mitteilungen*, and Beranek was at the end of his life an increasingly embattled figure. The *Mitteilungen* quoted from a radio broadcast by the Swiss journalist Salcia Landmann in which she defended Beranek against charges of anti-Semitism, and criticized the lexicographer Siegmund Wolf for not citing his work ('Die Lese Frucht: aus einer Sendung von Radio Bremen', *Mitteilungen* (1964) 2 (20): 153–4). Beranek's *Westjiddischer Sprachatlas* was criticized sharply by Florence Guggenheim-Grünberg on methodological and theoretical grounds. Among other things, Guggenheim-Grünberg took issue with Beranek's insistence on the priority of the framework of *Germanistik* (1966). Beranek's reply to Guggenheim-Grünberg was published posthumously (1968).

Beranek's case is unique among the Yiddish linguists of National Socialism. His work is referred to by Yiddish linguists to this day, and has in that sense entered the history of modern Yiddish linguistics proper (in spite of methodological reservations voiced by Guggenheim-Grünberg and others), this being defined as the ongoing investigation of the vernacular language of Eastern European Jewry according to the methods and principles of modern linguistics. On the one hand, Beranek's recognition that Yiddish had dialects, that it was shaped by contact with the land, and that Jews were not only dealers and businessmen, but had occupations and trades around which there was a genuine folk culture and a folklore to be studied, implied a rejection of a crude anti-Semitic stereotype. Yet measured against the organicist ideal, Beranek could only recognize the

Jews as imperfectly 'folkish'; they had a relationship to territory, but it is not as intimate as that of the non-Jews. They had their own mental geography and unique place names, but within this names of rivers and streams, for example, were marginal, since these entities are 'in general unimportant for Jewish life' (1961c: 132). In spite of this, Beranek goes on to give two examples of Jewish names for rivers on the next page (1961c: 133).

Lutz Mackensen

Mackensen became a member of the NSDAP on 1 November 1933⁴² (Lixfeld 1994: 79n). In a discussion of the question of 'German aloofness to Slavic culture' in the East, Uriel Weinreich (1958: 40n) writes: 'Mackensen (1937[a]) attempted to set up a scale of factors which determine the differential susceptibility of German colonists to environmental influence. His schema, however, which is tainted with racism, was not intended even by him to fit the parallel Jewish problem.' Mackensen's publications in this period include works on folklore, particularly folktales, and pre-history (1937b, 1937c, 1943). At the University of Greifswald Mackensen was director of the Pommeranian Folklore Archive until Karl Kaiser took over in early 1933 and the mentor of Johann Matthäus Ziegler, better known as Matthes Ziegler, who became Rosenberg's chief folklorist. Ziegler became editor of *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* in May 1934. Mackensen also became an honorary member of the Amt Rosenberg (Lixfeld 1994: 79, 108).

Mackensen used Yiddish to illustrate a discussion of the relationship between race and language published in *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* (1935). In this essay Mackensen argues that the question of the relation of race and language can be illuminated from the present, i.e. that one does not need necessarily to get lost in the thorny problems of ancient origins. Mackensen sees in Yiddish the chance to study what happens when a foreign race tries to use the German language: 'if there in fact do indeed exist links between race and language, then the German language must be fundamentally transformed in the mouths of the people of a foreign race and in these changes we are able to grasp racial distinctions' (1935: 313).

The origins of Yiddish are explained as follows. Yiddish was formed on the basis of western German varieties, especially High German dialects. Jews were attracted to these areas by the opportunities to trade and by the favourable fiscal and population policies of the local aristocracy. Yiddish is still in use in areas of the Saarland today. However the time of its greatest triumph ('seine grosse Eroberungszeit') came in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, at which point the resistance of the awakening German national consciousness and possibilities in the east led to migration out of German-speaking territory (1935: 313).

For Mackensen, the material or concrete origin of Yiddish lies in the German dialects of the

original area of settlement of the Jews. But the speech of Jews was early on altered by the admixture of Hebrew elements, and to this hybrid language (*Mischsprache*) were added Slavic elements once Jews had settled in the east. Mackensen's notion of the German spoken by Jews in the earliest period is not entirely clear, for he suggests that Yiddish can be defined externally as 'Jewish-German dialect + Hebrew + Slavic elements'. This may or not imply a point at which the language of the Jews and that of the co-territorial Germans was identical. But in any case his point is that this external classification is not sufficient; we must look to understand the 'inner linguistic form' of this 'German dialect in the mouths of Jews'. From this we can learn about the contrasting psychology of the two groups (1935: 313). Mackensen looks to the borrowings in German colloquial speech from Yiddish via the language of the underworld, the secret language of vagabonds, beggars and criminals. The language of the underworld was shaped by the Jews, and this secret language therefore was a conduit for the transmission of Yiddish elements to German. These terms stand out in the German lexicon, words such as those for 'to deceive' in Saarland German: 'betäppen, betuppen, leimen, bemauscheln, beschummeln, schümmeln, Schmuhe machen, Kallies machen' (1935: 314). Mackensen notes that Saarland Jews never quite succeed in hiding features of their pronunciation when dealing with rural German speakers of local dialect forms, for example their characteristic *ai* sound. Word compounds also take on a different form in Yiddish than in German, for example a Yiddish term such as *Duckermiedel* ('dukedom') or *merammemoosmelochnen* ('to counterfeit'). Yiddish is particularly rich in metaphors, and these metaphors are produced according to different principles to those in German, i.e. the form found in German *besebeln* ('to trick'), etymologically from *zebel* (Hebrew 'manure'). This had led to certain loan translations in German, which would otherwise not have arisen. The German speaker would have taken other forms of imagery as the basis for metaphorical innovation. Mackensen is apparently thinking of German colloquial forms such as *beseissen* ('to con, to fool'), from *Scheisse* ('shit'). Mackensen further suggests that the fragrant family names chosen by Jews at the turn of the eighteenth century, e.g. *Wohlgeruch*, *Veilchenduft*, *Rosendorf*, *Lilienfeld*, etc. reveal something about the racial character of the Jews, as do Yiddish exclamations ('wai!', 'Gott der Gerechte!', 'Wai geschrien!') and curses. Here there is reference to the femininity and affectivity of Yiddish and its speakers, a stereotype not confined to anti-Semitic writings on Yiddish.

Mackensen closes with the argument that Germanists would benefit from the study of this material, for here lies a key to understanding the original link between race and language, between the psychological make-up of a race and its expression in language: 'The contention that race and language have nothing to do with one another is false. Furthermore, the relationships between them can be determined scientifically' (1935: 315).

Mackensen's concern with 'inner form' and with the link between language, national character

and race does not put him outside the history of mainstream linguistics. However his use of the lexicon of the language of the German underworld ('Gauersprache', 'Rotwelsch', etc.) for anti-Semitic ends places him simultaneously in a long tradition of 'unscientific' criminological linguistics.⁴³ Mackensen himself points to the existence of an extensive criminological literature dealing with the language of Jews dating back to the fourteenth century (1935: 314). Mackensen fails in addition to make any distinction between West Yiddish and East Yiddish, and so fails to meet Beranek's criterion for serious scholarship on Yiddish.

One further example of this form of discussion about Yiddish from the National Socialist period is Dr Georg Bencker's⁴⁴ *Deutschum im Spiegel des Wortes* (1943), which included a chapter on 'Jüdische Eindringlinge'⁴⁵ ('Jewish intruders'). This work was intended for the instruction of school children, and the chapter on Jewish words explained which words should be avoided and why. The struggle against the Jewish people and their dangerous influence, in which young people are instructed as members of the *Jungvolk* and the *Hitlerjugend*, should be carried on no less strongly against Jewish words (1943: 225). Jewish words have come to German through 'neutral' languages like Italian and French, but then have adapted quickly the guise of their new surroundings. It takes research into word history to reveal their true homeland.⁴⁶ These intruders however give themselves away: 'the disguise so willingly adopted by people of Jewish blood is also in evidence with their words. Furthermore, it is immediately striking that almost all these expressions are related to just one area of meaning, to trade, deception, eroticism, crime' (1943: 225–6).⁴⁷

These discussions of Yiddish reflect a fear of 'promiscuous' mixing and hybridity. There was deep anxiety that German would become a mixed language like English, i.e. one which had lost its Germanic purity and succumbed to foreign influence (von Hoff 1944: 43). This anxiety was also expressed in attacks on certain kinds of philosophical writing, which were felt to be foreign in spirit and an attack on the purity of the mother-tongue. This is von Hoff's view of the writings of 'Ernst Israel Husserl' (von Hoff 1944: 44–5). The response of Yiddish linguistics to the discourse of hybridity was the notion of Yiddish as 'fusion language', one in which the disparate elements were brought into synthesis. That synthesis could not be reduced to the sum of the parts that had made it up. The vocabulary of hybridity was applied in turn to *daytshmerish*, a mixed language understood as the deformation of the 'natural' *mame-loshn* ('mother-tongue') by subservience to the norms of New High German (Hutton 1993: 47).

Peter-Heinz Seraphim

The strategically most important scholar of Eastern European Jewry in National Socialist Germany

was Peter Heinz Seraphim, brother of the economist Hans Jürgen Seraphim and son of the historian Ernst Seraphim. Seraphim, a member of the NSDAP and the SA, taught at the University of Königsberg, then in Breslau and Greifswald. His career was linked to a series of institutions involved in the study of Eastern Europe. Burleigh (1988: 32) distinguishes between *Ostforschung* and *Osteuropaforschung*, the former placing the emphasis on pre- and medieval history because of ‘the utility of these disciplines in the fight for Germanism’, the latter ‘in which the societies and political systems of Eastern Europe and the USSR were regarded as autonomous objects of research.’ The process of political co-ordination involved the absorption of *Osteuropaforschung* by *Ostforschung*, exemplified in the transformation of the journal *Ostforschung* itself (Burleigh 1988: 36–7; Klessmann 1985). The Institut für ostdeutsche Wirtschaft opened in Königsberg in May 1916, and became part of the university in May 1918. Other vehicles for the study of Germans in the East were the Osteuropa-Institut in Breslau (founded in 1918) and the Stiftung für deutsche Volks- und Kulturbodenforschung set up in Leipzig in 1926 (Burleigh 1988: 22–5).⁴⁸

Of Peter Heinz Seraphim Max Weinreich wrote that he ‘played a fatal role in familiarizing German scholars and political leaders with Eastern Jewry and, ultimately, in mapping out the “removal” scheme’ (1946: 75ff.). Seraphim’s research was initially aided by Theodor Oberländer in his capacity as head of the Bund Deutscher Osten and the Institut für ostdeutsche Wirtschaft in Königsberg, who recommended the aspiring academic Seraphim to Albert Brackmann (Burleigh 1988: 116–17). Brackmann was the head of the Publikationsstelle-Dahlem, termed by Burleigh ‘the crucial institution’ in the institutional co-ordination of *Ostforschung* (1988: 39).⁴⁹ In July 1936 Seraphim received 800 RM from the Publikationsstelle for a study trip to Kaunas, Riga, Wilna (Vilnius), Lodz, Lvov and Bucharest, and a further 2000 RM as a subsidy for the publication of his work *Das Judentum im osteuropäischen Raum*. Brackmann had had reservations that the research project might trespass on the territory of Walter Frank’s Reichsinstitut, but Oberländer sent a second more forceful recommendation, also noting that Seraphim was learning Yiddish (Burleigh 1988: 117).

Max Weinreich recalled that in the course of his researches in the pre-war period Seraphim visited the Yiddish Scientific Institute (Yivo) in Vilnius and on the strength of a letter of recommendation from the Polish government was given every assistance (1946: 77n). Seraphim published a brief description of the nature, function, and holdings of the Yivo (1938: 529, 529n). These holdings were subsequently looted by Rosenberg’s Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage in Frankfurt, a branch of the planned Party University (Aussenstelle der Hohen Schule der NSDAP). This institute was opened in Frankfurt from 26–8 March 1941 with a keynote address by Alfred Rosenberg. Among the guests were Eugen Fischer and H.F.K. Günther. Seraphim was by then the editor of *Weltkampf* which Rosenberg had elevated from an anti-Semitic scandal sheet

to the official publication of the institute. Seraphim gave a paper on population and economic problems in a European solution to the Jewish question.⁵⁰ Seraphim's work was subsequently written up in the journals *Jomsberg* and *Die Burg*, organs of the Nord-Ost Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and the Institut für deutsche Ostarbeit in Cracow respectively.

Like Beranek, Seraphim is dismissive of the previous work in Jewish studies, noting in the introduction to his *Das Judentum im osteuropäischen Raum* that 80 to 90 per cent of the academic literature has hitherto been by Jews (1938: 9), and that Eastern European Jewry has been neglected in most general discussions. This is all the more remarkable given that Eastern Europe is the core of world Jewry, and its spiritual centre (Seraphim calls it 'an inexhaustible reservoir'). From this centre waves of Jews emigrate and subsequently infiltrate (*einsickern*) into other countries (Seraphim 1938: 10). This view of the Jews of Eastern Europe is simply Seraphim's concept of the ghetto writ large. The ghetto in the modern era he sees as a headquarters from which Jewish economic and cultural expansion can proceed. Unlike other peoples, for whom the effect of the urban environment is destructive, in that it disrupts their relationship to tradition, their biological reproduction and their unity as a people, Jews are uniquely immune to the city and the town, since they have been urban residents for the past 200 years, and since the ghetto operated as protective wall and source of strength, guaranteeing their survival as a people. Just as the medieval ghetto was a basically voluntary institution, so today the concentration of Jews in towns is largely of the Jews' own choosing (1938: 355–6). This intense and highly compact society leads, paradoxically, to the assimilation of a number of Jews, and the creation of the most radical communists. For individual Jews who reject the Jewish religion are so to speak squeezed out of the ghetto and impelled into the surrounding 'host people' ('sie werden gewissermassen herausgepresst – und damit hineingepresst in das umwohnende Gastvolk', 1938: 368).

Seraphim's premise and point of departure is the Jewish grip on the national economies of Eastern Europe and the predominance of Jews in particular professions,⁵¹ but his approach is avowedly multidisciplinary. He draws on political, economic and intellectual history, on race studies, linguistics, sociology, the philosophy of religion (1938: 11). This multidisciplinaryity was a distinctive feature of *Ostforschung* as a whole. As regards the delimitation of the subject matter (the *Ostjuden*), Seraphim notes that a racial definition would be too open-ended, since Eastern European Jews have emigrated to many parts of the world. A linguistic definition of Eastern European Jewry is insufficient, as a significant layer of Eastern European Jewry no longer uses Yiddish or Judeo-German, the so-called 'Jargon' (1938: 12). In a subsequent footnote (1938: 375n) Seraphim explains that he prefers to use the term Yiddish. To call it 'Jewish' ('Jüdisch') is wrong, because there exist a number of Jewish languages. The term 'Jargon' is to be avoided because it fails to capture the character of Yiddish as an independent, mixed language. Nor do Jews

in Eastern Europe share a common sense of nationality, as many see themselves as Jews by confession only. Seraphim settles for defining his work rather vaguely as a study of the Jews in the territory of Eastern Europe, i.e. with that part of world Jewry which has a historically developed character and habits of thought characterized by the label *Ostjude* (1938: 12). Seraphim therefore seems to define his subject geographically⁵² and attributes to that geographic space a certain unity of cast of mind.

For Seraphim the fact that Jews are strangers everywhere marks them out from other nations, for whom regional loyalties often play a key part. While the Jews are also divided into 'types', they have a much stronger underlying unity and therefore, unlike the North German with the Germans of the West or South, they are always at home with other Jews with whom they are united by essence, by religion and tradition (1938: 328).⁵³

Seraphim argues nonetheless that Jews are in a quite exceptional position as regards their relationship to language. For they had ceased to speak Hebrew by the sixth century BC, and were thus exposed to the linguistic influence (to the point of assimilation) of the surrounding peoples. In this the Jews evinced a striking ability to transform their linguistic identity. The history of the Jews is a history of linguistic adaptation and transformation involving Aramaic, Greek, Persian, Arabic, Spanish and finally German. These linguistic contacts often result in the creation of mixed languages, but Seraphim implies that that Greek and Arabic, unlike Persian, Spanish and German, were not altered by the Jews (1938: 378).

The origin of Yiddish is described as follows. The oldest Jewish settlements in Germany date back to the Roman period. Gradually the Jews spread over the whole German Reich, with their language of daily communication being from early on Middle High German in its various dialectal forms. In their large scale migrations eastwards these Ashkenazic (German) Jews took this language with them. The first of these came from the Rhein and Main regions and brought their local dialects with them. To this came admixtures from other parts of the German Reich, with Upper Saxon and Thüringen dialect being the most important influence, to which were subsequently added high and middle German features. These 'archaized' German dialects formed the basic stock from which modern Yiddish is formed. Seraphim qualifies this by noting that the Jews significantly altered the vowel system of these dialects (the consonants remained unchanged), and that this difference was most probably there from the very beginning. In any case those Jews who left Germany quite definitely did not speak in the same way as the Germans. Seraphim suggests one cause of these changes to be the influence of liturgical Hebrew and the Hebrew writing system and vocalization on Yiddish, quoting Jewish sources in support.⁵⁴ Terms for religious life and abstractions tended to be drawn from Hebrew; the concrete world was described in German. The level of Hebraisms in the written language is higher than in the spoken. As in other

cases of Jewish migration, the Jews from Germany retained their adherence to German in the guise of Yiddish, for German was the status language of Eastern Europe and brought the Jews into the ruling elite. Hence they did not assimilate into the surrounding Slavic environment; on the contrary those Jews who had migrated into Slavic speaking territories gradually switched to using Yiddish, bringing with them words of Slavic origin, in addition to those borrowed directly from Slavic. Seraphim takes issue with the Jewish historian Graetz who had argued that the Jews held onto German out of feelings of piety towards the language, and that they saw in German the nearest thing to a holy language besides Hebrew.

Note that in this part of the discussion the distinction between Yiddish and German is blurred, a reminder that even for German anti-Semites the Jews' adherence to Yiddish was a sign of their adherence to an aspect of German culture, however interpreted. Seraphim dismisses this in favour of an explanation in purely opportunistic terms (1938: 376n): the Jews held onto German/Yiddish because it was useful to them socially and economically. A further striking of feature of Yiddish when compared with German was the loss of inflection and the consequent poverty of the language in its declensions and conjugations to express a variety of actions through one word. A rich gestural inventory, which inflections normally replace, accounts for this state of affairs.

But what general conclusions can we draw then about the relationship of Jews to language? Jew have a relationship to language quite unlike that of the other European peoples. In religious ritual the Jews use a dead language, Hebrew, although Zionists are trying to revive it artificially in the form of Neo-Hebrew. However in everyday life the Jews adapt themselves in a quite astonishing way to their surroundings, either through adopting the host language without amendment or through the creation of mixed languages, in which Hebrew and other linguistic fragments are mixed in, and which are set apart from the development of the stock languages. This sets the Jews apart from the other European peoples, for whom language, peoplehood and nation are inseparable.

What this discussion shows is how the ideology of the living mother-tongue is at the heart of Seraphim's perception of Jewish abnormality: the Jews use a dead language for liturgy, and other people's languages for everyday life. In the same spirit, Ernst Wachler argued the case for the close links between mother-tongue and religion in the journal *Nordische Stimmen* ('Nordic Voices') in 1931. He rejected the notion of a universal religion, arguing that religious expression must be found in the fusion of religion and mother-tongue (1931: 11).⁵⁵

One might object, notes Seraphim, that Germans in the United States have given up their language in the second and third generations and become fully assimilated. But this example shows the close ties between language and peoplehood, for these linguistically assimilated Germans are precisely those who have become 'one hundred percent Yankees' (1938: 378). If one thinks of

the German–Polish transitional area, one can see that language is the criterion for identity, for the transition from one language to another is an expression of a change in consciousness, a change in national (one would say now, ‘ethnic’, but see Chapter 9) affiliation to a particular people. One can see in this area the struggle to retain language and pass it on to the next generation, not only among the Germans but the other groups in the German–Polish transitional area. Here the switch from one language to another is an expression of a change of folk consciousness. People will fight hard to retain their language as an inheritance to be passed on to the next generation, and they will even leave their place of residence and emigrate (1938: 378).

The Jews however change their language as they change their clothes. For them, language is merely a means of communication, it is not sacred to them the way the European languages are – unconsciously – to their speakers. In switching languages however the Jews remain the same; they retain their ‘folkish–religious uniqueness’. The liturgical language is the locus of their linguistico-ethical loyalty. This explains why the Jews treat the languages of their environment with indifference, with scant respect for their pronunciation and grammatical rules, mixing in foreign elements and if necessary switching languages altogether. Yiddish is ‘a typical mixed language’, made up of archaic High German dialects of the fourteenth and fifteenth century, with Hebrew–Aramaic and various Slavic elements. In a footnote, Seraphim dismisses Heinz Loewe’s argument that Yiddish is a German dialect and Birnbaum’s account of a gradual development away from German by Jews who adapted the German material to their own world view (1938: 379n).

Jews have held onto German/Yiddish rather than go over to Slavic because German played an important role as an international medium of communication and trading language, though they have given up Yiddish where the surrounding culture is particularly powerful. Class also plays a part, with Yiddish being retained by shopkeepers, artisans and workers and relinquished by the Jewish intellectuals in favour of the national languages. This linguistic assimilation is not necessarily accompanied by a change of world view, although this is sometimes the case. The retention of Yiddish can be a sign of loyalty to orthodox Jewish religious values.

Seraphim’s analysis is contradictory. He sees Yiddish as a form of Jewish German, a language which the Jews have adopted and retained for mercenary reasons and which they do not regard as their sacred mother-tongue in the way that other Europeans do. Yet he seems to accept that loyalty to Yiddish can be a sign of the maintenance of traditional Jewish (i.e. religious) values. The point of Seraphim’s polemic is however to argue that Jews, unlike other peoples, do not normally change their value system when they change their language. They remain Jews whatever language they speak; if they relinquish Yiddish they tend to adopt, Seraphim implies, the most expedient of the co-territorial linguistic identities (1938: 398–9).

Concluding a statistical survey of the languages spoken by Jews in Europe Seraphim concludes

that linguistic assimilation has been slowed in the post-war period by the twin pressures of orthodoxy and nationalism. However in the Soviet Union, where linguistic and national minorities were being officially supported, assimilation has accelerated. Seraphim sees in the 'Bolshevikization' of Soviet Jewry the cause of its linguistic assimilation. Jews have moved from their traditional domicile in the old Pale of Settlement to large towns and cities and taken their place in the new Soviet socio-economic order (1938: 390–3).

Linguistically therefore Jews are anomalous. They have no special relationship with their mother-tongue and in relinquishing Yiddish do not necessarily give up their Jewish identity. In other words, Jewish identity transcends language in a way quite foreign to the European nations. If Germans switch to Polish then they will (eventually) become Poles. Jews are also unlike other European peoples in their ability to retain their ethnolinguistic identity in the city. Linguistic assimilation is much more likely in the countryside than in the town, the reverse of the case with other European linguistic minorities: 'the homeland of the everywhere homeless Jew is the ghetto of the towns.' The individual Jew alone in the countryside is truly in the Diaspora (1938: 385).

Having concluded that the Jews can be defined using linguistic and confessional criteria (since these are objective), Seraphim moves on to a consideration of two other ways of defining a people or nation: the possession of territory and racial unity or distinctiveness. Seraphim discusses the commonly held view that the Jews are not a people because they do not occupy their own territory, quoting Stalin's definition of a people which includes this criterion (1938: 396).⁵⁶ However Seraphim takes issue with the materialist conception of people (which includes the notion of a national internal market), and concludes that territory is necessary for a state, but not for a people or nationality (1938: 396). Most peoples have a core territory and marginal or peripheral areas of settlement, but one would hardly wish to deny others 'peoplehood' on these grounds. Even nomadic peoples such as the Gypsies and those driven into exile such as the Armenians are peoples (1938: 396). The Jews have the unity of spiritual outlook or world view, a communality of historical tradition and of blood ties. The objection that this unity derives from religion is invalid, since religious unity was simply the basis for or one of the preconditions for the development of a sense of peoplehood bound by history and fate. But have Jews the subjective sense of their own identity, the freely willed desire to be set apart from other peoples? Yes, says Seraphim, at least in the overwhelming majority. A minority of Jews defined by religion, race or language deny that they are part of the Jewish people. In the case of these people, where the will to peoplehood is lacking, we can include them among the Jews by using the racial, 'blood', linguistic or confessional criteria. But they cannot be counted as Jews in any national-political sense (1938: 397).

However this does not imply that a Jew can simply decide to become a Pole, any more than

a German can elect to become Japanese. For assimilation into another people is only possible between groups which have related or compatible racial structure and which belong to compatible cultural worlds. However the German who tried to become Japanese would put himself outside the German people's common affirmation of a shared community and historical destiny (1938: 397). The Jews can try to assimilate, but they will never be accepted as full members of their target community; these Jews are non-Jews but also non-Poles, non-Russians etc. This extreme rootlessness leads to a volatility in matters of identity and a lack of loyalty to the new identities espoused (1938: 399).

In a discussion of Jewish racial identity Seraphim argues that the Jews must be considered from a racial point of view (since they are as much a racial group as they are a linguistic, religious or folkish unit) but that they cannot be considered a pure race. This fact is generally recognized by Jewish race researchers⁵⁷ and Jews are best considered as the product of racial levelling. We cannot speak of pure races in Europe, since the Europeans have mixed in the main with other Europeans, but the Jews are mixed in a more radical way. They are a mixture of European and non-European elements, with the latter predominating. This mixed nature has been seen by some as inharmonious, and the concept of 'bastardization' has been applied. Seraphim remarks that this terminology passes from the descriptive to the value-laden (a reminder to the reader of his commitment to the scholarly and objective treatment of the Jewish question, 1938: 406). History has seen the Jews mix with a wide range of peoples under various circumstances. In spite of Jewish claims that Jews kept sexually apart from non-Jews from the Middle Ages onwards, Seraphim points to the effects of conquest (i.e. rape during war time) and illicit relations between Jews and non-Jews at various points. With time, various regional types emerged, with a distinct West and East Jewish racial characteristics, and various sub-groups within Eastern Jewry (1938: 409–12). Seraphim concludes that there is no single Jewish racial type, nor can we simply divide up Jewish sub-types by geographical area given their mobility and their continual racial mixing (1938: 412).

Seraphim holds back from using the language of race theory to condemn the Jews. He does not link his anti-Semitic beliefs directly to his analysis of the racial make-up of the Jews, though it is clear that he regards race as a factor in the inability of Jews ever to assimilate into European society. But what sets the Jews apart is their attitude to language, their lack of a mother-tongue and their ability to retain their identity while switching between one language of daily life and another. It is evident from this that the discourse of mother-tongue is not incompatible with, or juxtaposed with, theories of identity based on race. On the contrary, they are complementary. While Jews can learn to speak German, while they can even learn it from their mothers, they are not German and therefore it is not their mother-tongue.

Linguistics as a key to history

Within linguistics, the increasing dominance of the Neogrammarians in the late nineteenth century had opened the way for the study of Yiddish as part of *Germanistik*, itself a prominent branch of Indo-European comparative linguistics. The comparative–historical method seemed to promise a kind of ideological neutrality with regard to linguistic phenomena, and a framework within which Yiddish – regarded usually as at best an exotic curiosity, and at worst a corrupt distortion of German – could be studied as a member of the Germanic language family. This point of view was the key to the emergence of an emotionally neutral academic literature on Yiddish, exemplified in early studies by general linguists such as Edward Sapir (1915/16).

The rise of comparative and historical reconstruction also marked a reaction against the use of texts in reconstruction, and viewed the equation of ‘letter’ with ‘sound’ as misleading. Increasingly the modern dialects of a language were to be used in reconstructing its history, rather than the history of its texts. This marked yet another stage in the vernacular revolution within linguistics, one which gathered pace in the twentieth century as the linguists of the new ‘small’ nations began to look for their own individual national, i.e. vernacular, histories. This tension between letter (text) and sound (living dialect) reflected wider cultural conflicts between the grand narratives of traditional elite texts and histories and the lost spoken, quotidian everyday world of the ordinary speaker. Within Jewish culture the rise of secular ‘mother-tongue’ Yiddishism inevitably represented a challenge to the traditional, elitist triglossia of Ashkenazi Jewry (Aramaic, Hebrew, Yiddish). The claim that history could be reconstructed on the basis of the living spoken varieties of the vernacular language represented not only a methodological challenge to Rabbinic scholarship and European philology alike, but also an ideological one. Whose history should count?

Mieses argued strongly that linguistics can serve as a guide to history in the reconstruction of migrations. In his main work of descriptive linguistics he argued that Yiddish showed predominantly features of the Bavarian dialect of German, and that this was particularly pronounced in the early stages of Yiddish. For Mieses ‘the mosaic of Yiddish speaks historical volumes’ (1924: 270). The Alpine Bavarian characteristics of Yiddish show that this region was the point of immigration by Jews to the German-speaking lands. Linguistics tells us among other things that these Jewish migrants came mainly from Italy, but also from Hungary and the ‘Byzantine Balkans’ (1924: 271). Mieses’ main target is the theory that Ashkenazi Jews came from France along the Rhein. He states that the results of linguistic inquiry into the Yiddish language give us an entirely different picture of the history of Jews in the German speaking territories (1924: 272).

James Marchand (1987: 90) has criticized this faith in linguistics, taking issue with Max Weinreich’s ‘enthusiasm’ for linguistics and linguists in historical theorizing, and also with the

main schemas for the early migration of the Jews into German speaking territory: '[Weinreich's] scheme of Zarphat, Loez, Loter, etc. is a false one. Jews came into Germany from all over' (1987: 91).

To this one should add that the familiar scheme of questions posed within European linguistics, about the historical homeland of people X, the nature of the proto-language, the migrations undertaken by X and the causes of contemporary diversity (i.e. the 'fall into history' and contact with the contingencies of the world: rivers, state boundaries, conquest) only make sense when linked to a scepticism about written sources and traditional written and oral history. The linguistic evidence does not lie, because it is not trying to speak. It is there for us to interpret.

The rise of Yiddish dialectology reflected an implicit ideological claim to territoriality, to the groundedness of European Jewish life in the soil.⁵⁸ The ideological importance of this claim lies in its challenge to the notion that Jews cannot achieve a bond with territory, with the features of landscape and with agricultural life. Hitler saw the Jews as existing temporally, as unable to realize their nation geographically;⁵⁹ Yiddish dialectology, with its roots in European Romantic nationalism, was a potentially legitimizing discipline for the Jews of Eastern Europe, though that legitimization would also involve accepting undesirable baggage from the same source. In any case the ideological significance of dialectology in relation to claims about territory and culture is rarely fully and explicitly stated in general discussions of the discipline and its method; one can however sense an uneasiness in Beranek, expressed in his denial of a fully developed mental geography for the Jews.

The vernacular revolution in linguistics tied together the Romantic search for the lost homeland and the lost unity of the tribe, with the modern scientific distrust of traditional narratives. This mix of scientific rationalism and Romantic nationalism put the modern discipline of linguistics as a whole at odds with the indeterminacy and contingent nature of the ethnic and linguistic categories used by non-linguists. In the case of Yiddish, the dream of a diaspora culture which was to be nonetheless a national culture was already much more abstract than the other 'new nationalisms' of Europe; it ceded necessarily the priority of non-Jewish national boundaries and territorial divisions. In the case of Yiddish linguistics, the intractability of even this accommodating and compromising nationalism in the face of harsh reality led to a withdrawal from active engagement in politics and the cultivation of an ideal abstract object, the Yiddish language. Organicism and holism led to a concern with linguistic purism, with orthographic standardization and with the creation of a respectable linguistic object of description. Yiddish linguistics withdrew in effect into a private world in which the mother-tongue ideal could be realized and liberated from the political and ideological powerlessness of the 'native speakers'.⁶⁰ This process can be clearly

discerned at the Yivo conference of 1935, in which the academics of the institute came under attack for their remoteness from the masses (Yivo 1936; Hutton 1991, 1993).

In the case of German linguists, the triumph of National Socialism led many linguists to think that reality could be sculpted according to the organicist ideal, that the dream of perfect integration, the harmony of theory and practice could actually be achieved. The implementation of the organicist dream required the use of political coercion and physical violence, since it involved removing from the world those who did not fit in with, or who marred, that harmony, that perfect mirroring of individual and collective. It is within this framework that we can understand the active engagement in politics of linguists such as Kloss and Weisgerber.

Yiddish linguistics and German linguistics offer two extremes on a continuum of political engagement. The former was ultimately forced out of its involvement with reality by political and social persecution; the latter under National Socialism dreamed of actually reforming reality in conformity with the organicist ideal. Much as one can understand the emotional impulse behind the label ‘pseudo-scholarship’ applied by Uriel Weinreich and others to linguistics under National Socialism, I believe that it is not the right one. For even a scholar as morally bankrupt as Seraphim – who actively and consciously worked for the destruction of European Jewry – was operating within the framework of twentieth century linguistics, and within modern views of ethnicity where ‘assimilation’ is viewed as a negative feature of the modernization process.

VITALIST LINGUISTICS: LINGUISTICS AS THEOSOPHY AND CHARACTEROLOGY

Introduction

Linguists to a large extent are involved in seemingly mundane, if often formally complex, matters of description, and to outsiders the subject matter often seems dry and detached. But linguistics – overtly or covertly – also reflects the wider intellectual obsessions of the surrounding culture. Ideas promoted by linguists about form and meaning, human and ethnic origins, homelands and migrations, community and communication, put them in the company of mystics and dreamers, social visionaries and utopian theorists. For linguistics is fundamentally a search for transcendence, for insight into the language system in its purest state, and the subject matter of linguistics – language(s) – resists easy ontological categorization, complicating the relationship between linguistics and the ‘hard’ sciences on the one hand, and the human and social sciences on the other.

The publication of Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke’s *The occult roots of Nazism* (1992), Richard Noll’s *The Jung cult* (1994) and Peter Washington’s *Madam Blavatsky’s baboon* (1994) provides now a wealth of material on the links between popular social movements at the turn of the century and ‘main-stream’ intellectuals and scientists. What emerges from these works is that the boundary that might be drawn today between respectable academic science and ‘crack-pot’ theories of matter, race, language and history cannot be projected back onto the history of science in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The history of linguistics is written largely as if such popular social and intellectual movements did not exist, and as if ideas about linguistic form developed independently of speculations within the natural sciences. However the rejection of materialism that characterized the linguistics of the late 1920s and 1930s can be read in conjunction with debates about the nature of matter within the natural sciences in the late nineteenth century. For linguistics stood between the natural sciences on the one hand and the disciplines of culture on the other; the object of study, language, was both ‘natural’ (indeed it was

a defining property of the human species) and ‘cultural’, the object of institutionalized protection (*Sprachpflege*) and a social institution to set alongside the law, religion and the nation.

In this chapter I discuss a range of theories and writers in a somewhat schematic fashion, and the focus is less directly on linguistics in the Nazi period. This carries particular dangers of oversimplification and overgeneralization. In particular, the concept of vitalism is a fuzzy one, and could be applied to any philosophy or social theory in which the metaphor of life is dominant or prevalent. Christian theories of meaning, for example, often place particular emphasis on ‘the living word’ in the ‘Living Bible’. It is thus important to stress at the outset that the use of vitalistic metaphors is not evidence in itself of Nazi or fascist sympathies. The fascist militarist Ernst Jünger was influenced by the vitalist philosopher Hans Driesch; Driesch himself, however, was a pacifist who was forcibly retired in 1933. Driesch’s two most prominent students, Arnold Gehlen and Helmuth Plessner, are also a study in contrast. Gehlen (1904–76) became one of the most influential philosophers in Nazi Germany; Plessner (1892–1985) emigrated to the Netherlands in 1933 after being dismissed from his post in Köln.¹ Likewise, ideas from fringe Orientalism about the mystic East (e.g. Tibet) played a role in some versions of Nazi thought; however occultism, anthroposophy and astrology (and of course freemasonry) were repressed by the Nazi authorities, even by representatives of the figure most closely associated with mystic or occult Nazism, Heinrich Himmler.² As Goodrick-Clarke points out, the notion of Nazism as an occult conspiracy is a powerful post-war myth, particularly in popular culture representations of Nazism (1992: 217); the power of that myth makes detached discussion of this topic particularly difficult.

Vitalism

Vitalist ideas of individual and group regeneration were of great importance in political and social philosophies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and terms like ‘race’ and ‘blood’ were often used primarily for their vitalistic resonance. These philosophies had roots in German Romanticism, particularly in the scientific writings of Goethe. As an example of a vitalist philosopher one could cite Ernst Haeckel, the zoologist founder of the Monistic League (*Monistenbund*), whose links to the linguist August Schleicher have been documented in detail (Koerner 1989b).³ Haeckel was an anti-Semite, social Darwinist and eugenicist who warned of the effects of racial mixing (Goodrick-Clarke 1992: 13). He was a key figure in the rise of the *völkisch* movement in Germany in the decades leading up to the First World War (Noll 1994: 49). Sebastiano Timpanaro categorizes Haeckel as combining vulgar materialism, neo-Lamarckianism and mystic

vitalism; it was Haeckel who postulated the ‘biogenetic law’ that that ‘the ontogenetic recapitulates the phylogenetic’ (Noll 1994: 48; Timpanaro 1976: 188–9, 189n). Haeckel, through his prestige as an academic scientist at the University of Jena, had a profound impact on the reception of Darwin’s ideas in Germany (Gasman 1971: 161): human existence was presented as a constant struggle for individual and racial survival.⁴

Haeckel’s ‘natural religion’ involved the rejection of simple materialism as an alternative to religion, promoting belief in the unity of matter and spirit. Entry to the cult of ‘the true, the good, and the beautiful’ was through rituals in which:

the monist is [. . .] reborn through the rejection of the tenets of organized religion (separation), an initiation into the proof of the essential unity of matter and spirit (a period of liminality), and then participation in local societies promoting monistic ideas (reincorporation).

(Noll 1994: 49)

Like theosophy (see below), Haeckel’s Monist League attracted prominent personalities such as the physicist Ernst Mach, the sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies, Isadora Duncan, Rudolf Steiner and the psychiatrist August Forel. Noll (1994: 50–1) argues that the chemist and Nobel-prize winner Wilhelm Ostwald, who became president of the Monist League in 1911, may have through his vitalistic theory of energy influenced Jung’s notion of ‘psychic energy’. Jung quoted extensively from Ostwald in the period between 1913 and 1921 (Noll 1994: 50–1).

A key figure in the philosophical development of vitalism was Henri Bergson (1859–1941), whose concept of the *élan vital* (variously translated as ‘vital impetus’, ‘surge of life’) was central to his rejection of both mechanistic and teleological views of evolution, ‘radical mechanism’ and ‘radical finalism’ (Moore 1996: 116, 121). Bergson argues that we cannot explain living processes with reference to any mechanistic base, nor ‘by some purposes(s) which they are destined to attain’ (Moore 1996: 121). Bergson uses the plant as a metaphor for torpor and passivity in his evocation of bourgeois existence:

Life can go in the direction of movement and action, movement that is more and more effective, and action that is more and more free: here there is risk and adventure, and also consciousness, with its increasing degrees of depth and intensity. But on the other side, it can also abandon the ability for action and choice which is sketched in it, and arrange to get everything that it needs *in situ*, without going to look for it; in that case

it becomes a safe, tranquil and bourgeois existence, but it is also torpid, the first effect of immobility; soon it becomes definitive slumber, unconsciousness. These are the two routes for the evolution of life. Living matter has engaged in both routes. The first is, roughly, the direction of the animal kingdom . . . the second, roughly, that of plants.

(Bergson [1919] 1985: 11–12, quoted and translated in Moore 1996: 122)

One can use ‘vitalism’ as a cover-term for late nineteenth and early twentieth century revivalist movements of diverse kinds, including theosophy, characterology, eugenics, radical nationalism, cultural fascism within modernism,⁵ primitivism, the ‘Nazi–Pagan’ critique of Christianity, and the New Age movement. For the search for new forms was linked to the reconstruction or reanimation of old forms in art, music, politics, and language, to the impulse to strip away the clutter and confusion of the present and see the essentials, the foundations in their true light.

Vitalism can be seen in the context of the answer modern linguistics has given to the ontological question: ‘What kind of thing is language?’ The key to this can be found in the *Course in General Linguistics*:

A language might [. . .] be compared to a sheet of paper. Thought is one side of the sheet and sound the reverse side. Just as it is impossible to take a pair of scissors and cut one side of paper without at the same time cutting the other, so it is impossible in a language to isolate sound from thought. To separate the two for theoretical purposes takes us either into pure psychology or pure phonetics, not linguistics.

(Saussure [1922] 1983: 111)

Saussure was too much of a Neogrammarian to suggest that these divisions in conceptual and phonic space were anything other than arbitrary in the various senses of that term. However, once it was asserted that a language reflected a cultural world view, once it was viewed as ‘mother-tongue’, then it was evident that there was something precious or intrinsically valuable about the particular structure associated with a particular group or nation. The stamping of form onto substance in this context took its place alongside ideas of inner form in matters of individual bodily form (phrenology, physiognomy) and racial form (the fusion of *Geist* and *Volkskörper*). A language was energy, force, a dynamic world view in which form and meaning (body and soul) were fused.

One can also use the label ‘vitalist’ as key to understanding the importance of ‘context-of-

situation' and contextual meaning in the linguistics of the 1920s and 1930s. For the injunction to look to context was itself a rejection of stale metaphor and etymology to find meaning in 'real processes taking place in man's relation to his surroundings' (Malinowski 1923: 336). Malinowski's celebrated essay on context appeared as a supplement to Ogden and Richards' *The meaning of meaning*. In this connection it is worth pointing out that C.K. Ogden was also the translator of Hans Driesch's *The history and theory of vitalism* (Ogden 1914). Driesch was perhaps the most important thinker in late nineteenth century vitalism (sometimes referred to as 'neo-vitalism'), and was also a formative influence on the philosophy of Ernst Jünger (see below). It is evident that the contextual theory of meaning was more than a mere methodological principle in the description of human communication; it served in Malinowski's case as the expression of an ideal of human socio-cultural integration, one that involved the rejection of decontextualized abstract categories.

Vitalist linguistics has also shown a strong preference for active, dynamic verbs over noun plus copula or passive constructions. For Günther the active verbs of the Indo-Germanic languages reflected the dynamism (*Tatkraft*) of the Nordic race (H.F.K. Günther 1933: 481). The linguistics of the Third Reich is replete with vitalistic rhetoric, with a rejection of materialism, with a search for meaning and renewal in the 'New Germany'. Alverdes (1934: 834) called for linguistics and aesthetics to transcend their disciplinary concerns to assist in the creation of a 'living and ever present inner Reich'.

While much of this rhetoric shades off into the general vocabulary of renewal and regeneration, I would argue that linguistics in the twentieth century was the home of a vitalistic theory of matter, in the specific sense of the term vitalism as defined by the anti-materialists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The principle of arbitrariness allowed that the sign was form stamped on the physical and the conceptual, but acted as a check on the meanings and connections that could be read into the resulting fusion. But where was the line between 'real' connections of etymology or meaning and reconstructive or associative fantasy?

Ernst Jünger and the non-arbitrary sign

Ernst Jünger⁶ has been credited with having 'undermined the Weimar Republic more effectively than any other single author' and with having 'helped foster a mental climate in which Nazism could flourish'. Wistrich (1995: 132–3) argues that Jünger shared a nihilistic outlook with the National Socialists, and hence had paved the way for Nazi atrocities.⁷ Subsequently however he rejected National Socialist 'methodology', although not its 'ideology'.

As a student in Leipzig in the early 1920s, Jünger studied philosophy and biology, attending lectures by the philosopher of vitalism Hans Driesch (Meyer 1993: 70, 627, 665–6). For Jünger, war was a heightened and purified form of life; combat involved not only destruction, but was the ‘male form of procreation’ ([1922] 1960c: 53–4). War is the collective labour of the fighting men, one which gives birth to a future in which they are bound together. In the arena of war one can experience that ‘hard, European morality’, away from the hubbub and weakness of the masses. This morality asks only about the goal to be achieved, not what must be staked to achieve it. It is the language of a new moral order:

That is the exalted language of power, one which sounds to us more beautiful and intoxicating than everything that went before, a language which expresses its own values and has its own profundity. And the fact that this language is understood only by a few, sets it above and apart, and it is certain that only the best, that is the bravest, can make themselves understood with it.

([1922] 1960c: 54)

Jünger’s vision of war is nihilistic in the sense that it abandons key moral questions about war, but not in the sense that it renounces all moral values. On the contrary, it is only through war that certain moral states can be obtained. While that vision is built on patriotism and service to country, it is ultimately not nationalistic. For the bonds that unite the soldiers at the front, the enemies, are stronger than those that link them to the masses of their respective countries. And the language that they have in common is a common sensibility, a common code of chivalry and gallantry, one that the weak, feminine masses cannot understand, one that transcends ‘mother-tongue’ and national origin.

Jünger’s 1934 essay ‘In praise of the vowels’ (*Lob der Vokale*) cites among others Leibniz, Johann Georg Hamann, Jacob Grimm, and Rimbaud. All these authors have made a contribution to the European tradition that has questioned the relationship between sounds and meaning, looking either into the letters or the sounds to find meaningful patterns (the ‘alchemy’ of language). Why, might one ask, does the martial, cultic male intellectual dedicate a work to the vowels, rather than to the consonants? Consonants are linked, says Jünger, in a mysterious way to ‘law’, and to ‘will’ ([1934] 1960b: 16); ‘alliteration is a male rhyme; the language of technology is poor in vowels’ ([1934] 1960b: 11). At the very outset Jünger quotes Grimm’s observation that the consonants are fundamentally male, the vowels female ([1934] 1960b: 13–4). The consonants stand firm against the vicissitudes of history, while the vowels are transient, delicate. In the

Semitic languages the vowels are not represented in the script, except sometimes below the line in subscripts. This, claims Jünger, reflects the culture (*Geist*) of the people, which in this case includes the subordination of women to men. The vowels are the colour, the consonants the lines of the drawing.

However, according to Jünger, it is precisely in the transient (*das Vergängliche*) that one can find real life, both temporally unique and eternal. In memory it is the transient details that remain, nor the external frame within which they are set. For example we are more likely to remember the flowers that were in bloom than the exact date by the calendar. In the vowels we find the meaning that is general, i.e. undivided, non-specific, and in the consonants the particular meaning: unity as against multiplicity. The precise properties of things are indicated by the consonants. *W* appears in words of movement (in particular water), and balance (*Welle, Woge, Wirbel, Quelle, Qualle, Quecksilber, schwanken, schwellen, wallen, wackeln, Wendel, Wende, Wiege, Gewicht, wirken, Wechsel, weben, Wandel, Wahl*). Consonants therefore should be seen as signs of the specific, expressions of the changeable. This even though in the material substance of the word it is the vowels which are fleeting and transient. The eye rots faster than the skull that surrounds it, nonetheless it is in the study of physiognomy that we learn about the actual person, rather than through phrenology ([1934] 1960b: 15).

Jünger claims that one can find passages where this quality of the consonant is expressed in a kind of striving ‘to devour the world’, one that gives rise to a sense of incompleteness and lack of fulfilment. In illustration, he quotes a line from Goethe’s *Hochzeitlied*: ‘Da pisperts und knisterts und flüsterts und schwirrt’. This effect can however be achieved with ease by the vowel. Goethe’s poetic lines with their open-endedness seem to require some continuation, but the magic of the vowel is such that it can express finality and closure ([1934] 1960b: 16). The lyric poem is a higher art form than the ballad (though the line between the two is not always clear), for the latter has the quality of the sketch-lines, the will, the consonant, while the lyric poem partakes of colour, repose and the vowel. Goethe’s ballads on the whole (the ‘Hochzeitlied’ example notwithstanding) possess a greater sense of repose than do Schiller’s, in whose ballads ‘the consonantal effect sometimes is distracting’. The strength of vowels is expressed more in repose than in movement, a sign of a special quality of strength that places the vowel above the consonant.

It is particularly difficult to translate lyric poetry, because the vowels can rarely be caught in another language ([1934] 1960b: 18). End rhymes are produced through or with the consonants, but the rhyme itself is made ‘on’ the vowel ([1934] 1960b: 19). Vowels are the stuff of linguistic life, even though they are not its strongest means of expressing content. Is this the harmony of an echo, an answer from the realm of magic? Is it a mirror in which the secret form of the word sees

itself? We get nearer to the mark, claims Jünger, when we recognize in the rhyme a double mirror, which gives two images of an object placed in front, or a double echo that evokes one and the same primal voice. Through the consonants, rhyme evokes the plurality of the world and the similarity between its formations; the vowels its deepest correspondence which springs from a timeless source and fills the transient vessel of the vowels. Jünger concludes ([1934] 1960b: 20): ‘Rhyme is the recollection of the common roots of words, to which no linguistic research will ever penetrate and which the poet glimpses in his dreams.’

Most words, notes Jünger, are made up of a combination of consonants and vowels. However there are some exceptions, words which are purely vowel sounds such as German *Ei* (‘egg’), French *eau* (‘water’) and English *I*. German no longer has any purely vocalic prepositions, but in such cases we are at the border between the word and the cry or interjection. While this border is not well-defined, Jünger regards the distinction between sound-language (*Lautsprache*) and that of words (*Wortsprache*) as being of profound significance. Speech is in effect a competition between these two modes. Word-language is permeated by sound-language; the latter trying to elevate or give new life to the former (*steigern, beflügeln*).

Sound-language is more general than word-language, since the realm of words encompasses only a section of the gamut of human experience. Word-language subsists in the middle range, where there is voluntary control of language, where the gift of language can be used with freedom and control. In this domain the person is unchallenged master of his words, a freedom which carries with it responsibility. That responsibility is expressed for example in its extreme form in the binding power of an oath. But we do not live in this domain alone, but are also creatures of an elemental realm. Once we enter this zone, word-language deserts us, and sound-language takes over. At these moments the distance between the speaker and language disappears, and new forms of understanding come into play. In moments of high tragedy words may give way to sounds ‘which are addressed to gods and stones’ ([1934] 1960b: 22). The cries of pain on the battlefield have an unmistakable meaning; in these extreme moments people become very alike, even in their voices. Consonants are burnt away: ‘the sounds of the most intense pain have a purely vocalic nature’ ([1934] 1960b: 23). All strong human passions and emotions have their own sound-language; the knowledge of which we are born with in some ‘natural or supernatural’ way. In human encounters we listen for the sound-meanings behind the word-meanings, we know our enemy by his voice rather than by what he says.

It is the vowel that dominates in this ‘wordless language of passion’ (1960b: 24). That domination is seen in the purely vocalic nature of mother–child language, but can also be seen in the sounds humans use to communicate with animals. It is found in the language of incantation

and human mystery. This mystical and original language is prior to, and transcends, human tribal and cultic divisions.

In practice, however, it is difficult to give a precise account of the emotions associated with each vowel. Different languages and dialects, and different peoples, have created different associations, and vowels can also vary greatly in their manner of articulation. Nonetheless in general we can associate *A* and *O* with the sublime; *I* and *U* with depth and darkness, and *E* with some middle position. The opposition between *A* and *O* on the one hand, and *I* and *U* on the other also connotes ‘flame’ versus ‘darkness’, and ‘father’ versus ‘mother’ ([1934] 1960b: 28). Jünger goes on ([1934] 1960b: 29) to characterize the individual vowels in terms of the way they express ‘wonder’ (*A* and *O*), ‘distaste’ (*I* and *U*), etc. The sounds of the cities are mostly cries of sadness and danger (*I* and *U*). Different kinds of laugh are examined ([1934] 1960b: 31). Jünger emphasizes that we cannot infer the meanings of the vowels from looking at word-meanings. There are many cases where sound-meaning coincides with word-meaning, but also as many counter-examples. Here Jünger disassociates himself from what he terms a ‘combinatorial’ approach, one he likens to that of a man who looks up the meanings of his dreams in a book of dreams. Human language is neither echo nor imitation; therein lies its freedom. Languages belong to human history; sounds, especially vowels, stand outside time. Languages have lives like plants; but the sounds, like the earth in which the plant grows, are part of the original matter of which the earth is made (‘Die Sprachen leben wie Pflanzen, aber die Laute gehören wie die Erde, in der sie wurzeln, zum Urstoff der Welt’, [1934] 1960b: 32).

Jünger considers the analogy between speech sounds and light, and colour, briefly discussing Rimbaud’s famous poem, *Les voyelles*. While praising the poem, Jünger does not concur with the links it sets up; he ascribes the differences to the fact that Rimbaud was writing in French.⁸ There is however a key difference between vowels and colours; colours are arranged in space and can therefore be seen next to each other; vowels appear consecutively, in sequence. However, Jünger’s gloss on this difference ends itself in a visual metaphor:

So while we can view the colours in pictorial calm, the vowels appear in the accelerated progress of language in continually changing orders and combinations, in kaleidoscopic configurations, in which each little segment takes on new and startling shades.

([1934] 1960b: 34)

In the closing sections Jünger examines in greater detail the meanings of the individual cardinal vowels, as well as looking at the two diphthongs *EI* and *AU*. *A* for example ([1934] 1960b: 34–5)

is the ‘king of the vowels’, used as the sign of identity in algebra. Grimm calls it the mother of all speech sounds, but this is rejected by Jünger, for whom it is the ‘paternal’ sound, as in the German word *Aar* (a poetic term for ‘eagle’), in contrast with the prefix *ur-*, which denotes (maternal) origin. The colour with which it is associated is purple; as an interjection it connotes admiration, in laughing it expresses a jovial cheerfulness. It is frequently found in incantations and spells (‘Im Namen des Vaters’). Jünger gives the following overview:

The A means height and breadth; the O, height and depth; the E, the void and the sublime; the I, life and decay; the U, procreation and death. In the A we invoke power, in O light, in E the creative spirit [*Geist*], in I the flesh and in U the maternal earth. On these five sounds, in their purity and in their muddying, blending and intermingling, the consonants bring to bear the multiplicity of matter and movement. Through a few keys we can open up the world in all its richness, to the extent that it reveals itself to the ear by means of language.

([1934] 1960b: 46–7)

Jünger is a modernist critic of the death of metaphor; for the task of the modernist is to revitalize human forms, the language of poetry and art. The vowels represent the elemental force of language, they are a vocabulary of the human emotions, obscured by the linearity of word-language; they are an ideal universal language where the body meets the spirit.

Jünger’s preference for the ‘feminine’ vowel over the masculine consonant can be explained with reference to his vitalism. Jünger is a critic of materialism and the loss of values that it connotes for him. In his celebrated essay ‘Total mobilization’, Jünger asks rhetorically of the First World War dead ([1922] 1960c: 146): ‘Who would have thought that these sons of a materialistic generation could have met death with such burning ardour?’ His works are permeated by a rejection of the mechanical and the material in favour of the organic and the ‘vital’; however in Jünger’s work, the machine itself can be reclaimed as an image of dynamism and directed energy; likewise elitism and collectivism can be reconciled.⁹ The vowel is alive; it carries the vitality of language and lives through language. The consonant is rigid, and less subject to change, but its rigidity is skeletal. The vowel – like moisture, wetness ([1942] 1960a: 36) – predominates at the extremes of human experience, in pain, ecstasy, joy and death.

Jünger’s work links the philosophy of vitalism to characterology (as does Ludwig Klages, see below), as evinced in the title of his post-war work *Sprache und Körperbau* (‘Language and the build of the body’, [1947] 1960d). That work forms part of a wider literature in the twentieth

century which grounds the metaphorical structure of language in the nature of the human body (including the physical nature of mind), a literature which includes a substantial amount of academic linguistics.¹⁰

Hennig Brinkmann's year zero: 1933

In the conclusion to an early work (1926: 86), Hennig Brinkmann¹¹ summarized the Romantic philosophy of 'vitalism', setting out the dialectic polarities between movement and stillness, transformation and death. The power to unify or reconcile these oppositions is love, and poetry is able to represent never-ending life ('das unendliche Leben'). Brinkmann's second major work (1931) was a study of linguistic change in Old High German. For Brinkmann, changes in the tense system of Old High German are linked to changes in the world view of the speakers. Brinkmann (1931: 52) argued that the change involved a shift from the perceptual experiencing of events through the senses to increasing causal and temporal rationality, one expressed in the pluperfect. The cause of this change is Christianity (1931: 52–3). In an essay published during the war, Brinkmann observed that the medieval orders of knights were able in large measure to maintain their own realm of meaning and narrative forms against Christian and Latin idiom (1939: 125).

Brinkmann exemplifies one branch of twentieth century vitalist thought that saw in the Jews a negation of the healthy human life-force; Brinkmann's rejection of a material view of the sign and his anti-Semitism meet in a radical cultural–historical nationalism that emphasises dynamism and martial activism.

In his methodological conclusions (1931: 125–6), Brinkmann argues that we should apply the same principles to the study of the past as we do for the present. Brinkmann is referring to the need to transcend the Neogrammarian tradition, while paying due deference to its achievements and methodological rigour. The individual–phonetic point of view should be replaced by one founded in the social–linguistic and historical: what is required is a picture of Old High German in which the dynamic processes of history can be discerned.

What Brinkmann was arguing for was a cultural–historical approach to explaining linguistic change and writing linguistic history. This would involve the inclusion in linguistic history of socio-political, ecclesiastical and economic factors, as well as evidence from art history and archaeology. Brinkmann's work thus reflected once again the general dissatisfaction with the perceived methodological narrowness of the Neogrammarian approach to the study of the past.

In the foreword to his 1934 *Die deutsche Berufung des Nationalsozialismus*, Brinkmann evoked a *scientia militans*, one that did not lose itself in contemplation of the past, but looked to

the present to find new questions. Brinkmann hailed the events of 1933 as representing a profound break with the past. While it might seem unduly daring to single out from the flux of history this moment in time, the events of the past few months showed that the changes were profound, allowing a clear view of what has been left behind:

In looking back at the things we have overcome we recognize where we stand and whither we are going. And we can perceive that after a long dalliance in foreign territory, after a long sojourn in foreign dwellings, we are on the verge of returning to ourselves, to lead our own life in our own living space. At the same time we cherish the hope that whoever follows the path of the pen holds firm to the conviction that the dramatic turn about [*Umkehr*] of this year represents a deed of German salvation.

Brinkmann's view of history was as follows (1934: 7). The Germanic tribes were not destined to live and develop their unique character undisturbed; their migrations to the south brought them into contact with Mediterranean culture, which was under the influence of the culture of classical world and of Christianity. In this a transformation of the Nordic culture was effected through contact with the culture and thought structures of different racial elements. This contact brought new energy and life into the moribund Mediterranean world. Charlemagne unified the Germanic tribes, which, though related by blood, showed patterns of racial differentiation, by building on a nascent common set of ethics, law and language. But in bringing the tribes together, he also brought in foreign elements (*Fremdgut*). The result was a fusion of the Germanic with Classical and Christian elements. Different Germanic groups felt this impact in different ways. The Bavarians, pioneers of the south-east, had the true love of homeland of the Dinaric (Adriatic) race. The rural outweighed the urban, and the result was a unyielding and autochthonic resistance to any influx from outside. The Prussians (1934: 11), on the other hand, built the Second Empire and refined a Germanic concept of duty to the state, the subordination of the individual to the whole, where loyalty to the leader is forged in battle. From Prussia also came the modern written language, which united the German people before they had won a unified state. In Prussia, the notion of *Volk* was realized in the struggle against the Romance way of life. But now Germany has a unified, organic culture to represent its claims to the world, one that can overcome the mechanized West which is on the point of collapse. The German people can head into a free and unknown future, casting off the past. Victory over Napoleon had been the triumph of the idea of *Volk* (1934: 15).

Brinkmann saw a need to balance the Germanic and the Romance elements in the German

inheritance (1934: 13, 17). His rejection of the Enlightenment was, however, unequivocal. He argued that the organic unity of all aspects of human thought, belief and activity was shattered by the rise to prominence of abstract theorizing, and the development of an autonomous intellectual faculty, independent of art, religious belief, etc. Belief in reason triumphed over faith in symbols.

The so-called ‘German movement’ (*Deutsche Bewegung*) of the Goethe period shared many ideas in common with National Socialism (1934: 16–21). The former had immeasurable intellectual and spiritual riches, the latter had unprecedented power to transform reality. But National Socialism was also a step forward, for it had mobilized the political, state-creating will of the Nordic race, one lost by the bourgeoisie who have taken refuge in abstract intellectualizing and economic activity. Capitalism is the application of the rational to economic affairs; it knows no moral categories and respects no natural boundaries. It is merely the abstract exploitation of capital (1934: 29), one that destroys the organic unity of the *Volk*. Capitalism creates a soulless world, where all distinctions are reduced to quantities, to number. The whole is broken into its parts, and these take on lives of their own (1934: 30). Materialism overestimates the importance of causal–mechanical and empirical explanations, technology, through the railway and modern transport infrastructure, and the modern media have together reconstructed our sense of time and place. Technology ruptures organic solidarity, it creates its own world and follows its own laws.

The rise of the city had destroyed the rural way of life; as early as the 1300s foreign racial elements most likely of Eastern origin had domesticated themselves and made themselves comfortable as traders and artisans. Jews had a destructive influence on life and culture; they promoted capitalism; they are self-serving (1934: 53). Heine as the Jewish outsider was the materialist, the egotistical sensualist; Börne lacked any inner relationship to the German inheritance (1934: 34–5). Börne, Heine and Marx, from their Paris base, exercised a pernicious influence on Germany; any move towards Western thought on the part of Germany was an opportunity for the Jews to conquer from within, and lead the Germans away from their true selves (1934: 36–7). Marx is the Jewish seducer (1934: 54).

The modern mass lacks organic solidarity, it is a pathological phenomenon; modern ideas of equality have led to a levelling of racial distinctions (1934: 56). The farmer lives in intimate relation to the land and to its history; he inherits his land from his forebears, whose blood is a formative force in his family and its destiny. He receives and passes on. The denizen of the *Grossstadt* is the same everywhere; differences of sensibility are levelled out (1934: 57); it offers favourable conditions to the Jew, since the original inhabitants have no advantage against the outsider. Jews are a ‘foreign, cultureless people’ who seek the destruction of the culture of the West (1943: 67). National Socialism defines *Volk* as equivalent to race, and sees in the bonds of

race a deeper unity than that of *Sprachgeist*. Given that people were assigned to national group by language, the ability of Jews to learn the German language meant that they could appear to become part of the German people, and even share its mentality to some extent. But in fact their race meant that they could never share fully in the German *Geist*, but their mastery of the language allowed them to act as a destructive force from within. The Romantic conception of the *Volk* as linguistic community thus was insufficient; hence National Socialism resorted to the notion of a community whose continuity is assured through ties and obligations of blood (1934: 76). Not every life is of equal value; there are destructive elements, the transmission of which is undesirable; the unrestrained reproduction of undesirable elements must be hindered in the interests of the collective, just as valuable elements must be encouraged to reproduce. Germans are a composite of the races that live on German soil; each brings its own special qualities to the whole (1934: 84).

Brinkmann's emphasis on community as primarily a racial unit might seem to put him at odds with many of his fellow linguists in the Third Reich. But what was implicit in their works, that Jews have an unhealthy attitude to language, that they lack a true mother-tongue and therefore end up infiltrating other nations, is here laid out in unambiguous clarity.¹²

The attack by Weisgerber's generation of linguists on Neogrammarian materialism or positivism, the postulation of notions such as 'inner form', the use of words such as *Kraft* and *Macht* ('power', 'strength', 'might'), and the evocation of language as an autonomous life-force, all these can also be seen as mirroring the rejection of mechanism in biology and the natural sciences that characterizes the intellectual tendencies that have been labelled 'vitalism'. The idea of languages as repositories of energy constructing life worlds for their speakers remained important in post-war German linguistics, as the title of the journal *Wirrendes Wort* ('the potent word' or 'the effective word' or 'the word in action') illustrates. Brinkmann was one of the editors of this journal, and a special issue was published in honour of his 60th birthday.¹³ In that journal Weisgerber distinguished between Chomsky's generative linguistics and his own view of language as energy (*energische Sprachbetrachtung*, see Weisgerber 1971c, 1972).

Ironically, this was one Humboldtian attacking another. Both linguists have drawn on the vitalistic imagery of language as *Energie*.¹⁴ Another key vitalistic term to be found in Weisgerber's work is the notion of *Leistung* ('effective action, achievement'). This term was employed by Friedrich Panzer in his address to the Deutsche Akademie on 15 October 1932; Panzer wished to stress how languages were more than mere interchangeable instruments of communication (Panzer 1932: 401). The title of Weisgerber's war-time book on Brittany promises an analysis of the Breton people in terms of their territory, numbers and 'vitality' or *Lebenskraft* (Weisgerber 1940a). The link between vitalism, linguistics and Nazism is plain to see in the ecstatic rhetoric of Weisgerber's address at the University of Marburg on 19 June 1938 (Weisgerber 1938b).¹⁵

Theosophy and anthroposophy: linguists as ‘cranks’?

Theosophy was in its day an important movement with links to both vitalism, characterology and linguistics.¹⁶ The Theosophical Society was founded by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Henry Steel Olcott in New York on 7 September 1875, and it spread rapidly as a movement, ultimately breaking into dissenting branches and rival movements. Theosophy can be defined in terms of occultism, esotericism, spiritualism, mysticism and gnosticism; the Theosophical movement drew on both Western esotericism (‘magic, Hellenistic and Renaissance neo-Platonism, the Cabbala, the Tarot pack, and communication with spirits’) and Eastern mysticism, especially Vedanta and Mahayana Buddhism (Crews 1996a: 26). Among those influenced by theosophy were W.B. Yeats, Mondrian, Kandinsky, Gandhi; perhaps the most prominent linguist to have taken theosophical ideas seriously was Benjamin Lee Whorf (Joseph 1996a, Hutton and Joseph 1996).¹⁷ The occult novelist Gustav Meyrink, subject of a linguistic study by Hans Sperber¹⁸ (Sperber 1918), was the founder of the Blue Star Theosophical lodge in Prague in 1891 (Goodrick-Clarke 1992: 28).

After Blavatsky’s death, the movement fragmented. Among the second generation of leaders and thinkers were Annie Besant, Katherine Tingley, G.I. Gurdjieff, Peter Damien Ouspensky and Jiddu Krishnamurti. Krishnamurti ultimately renounced theosophy and instructed seekers that there was ‘nothing to follow but their inner light’ (Crews 1996a: 26). The most influential post-Blavatsky figure, however, was arguably Rudolf Steiner, the founder of the anthroposophical movement in Germany. Steiner disliked the bias of mainstream theosophy towards Indian philosophy, and wanted to remain within the tradition of Christian mysticism.¹⁹

Like race theory, theosophy was both an off-shoot of linguistics and also a formative influence. The theosophical impulse was comparativist and reconstructionist; it looked to comparative religion to uncover the core of human wisdom, lost over the ages. Modern linguistics – effectively founded by Bopp in 1816 – had distinguished itself from speculation and fantasy by the imposition of a method, the so-called historical–comparative method. Yet the introduction to Bopp’s foundational work was written by Karl Windischmann, a philosopher and speculative historian of quite a different intellectual temperament to the sober Bopp (see for example Windischmann 1807). It might be argued that the contrast between the methodological Bopp and the Romantic fantasist Windischmann encapsulates precisely the advance that linguistics made over eighteenth century whimsy. But while the rhetorical and methodological divide that opened up between ‘scientific’ linguistics and ‘speculative’ linguistics was institutionalized in the course of the nineteenth century, in fact the search for the lost history of the peoples of the world remained on the agenda of both streams, and the separation between them was only as certain as faith in the

scientific method to distinguish respectable etymologies from irresponsible ones.²⁰ In the twentieth century the tenuous nature of the divide was dramatized by the career of the philologist and Dead Sea Scroll scholar John Allegro, whose etymological researches led him to conclude that Christianity arose out of fertility and drug cults in the ancient Near East (Allegro 1973).²¹

The other candidate for founder of the comparative method, Sir William Jones, was much closer in spirit to the Windischmanns and Allegros, than to Bopp. His fame rests now largely upon the quoted statement made in 1786, that the relationships between Sanskrit, Greek and Latin showed too strong an affinity to have been produced by chance: ‘so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source’.²² Jones was, however, not interested in detailed linguistic reconstruction; he was looking for clues to the communalities underlying the great civilizations of the world, arguing in his 1784 essay ‘On the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India’ for example that there was a resemblance between the popular worship of the old Greeks and Italians and that of the Hindus which was ‘too strong to have been accidental’. Of the Hindus he concluded:

that they had an immemorial affinity with the old Persians, Ethiopians, and Egyptians, the Phoenicians, Greeks, and Tuscans, the Scythians or Goths, the Chinese, Japanese, and Peruvians; whence, as no reason appears for believing, that they were a colony from any one of those nations, or any of those nations from them, we may fairly conclude that they all proceeded from some central country, to investigate which will be the object of my future Discourses; [. . .]

([1784] 1970: 196)

Jones’ view was that that place of common origin was Iran (Marshall 1970: 15); his project was that of reconstructing ‘a general union or affinity between the most distinguished inhabitants of the primitive world, at the time when they deviated, as they did too early deviate, from the rational adoration of the only true God’.

Sanskrit studies, and its off-shoot Indo-European studies, was required in part to assuage the anxiety of discovering ancient non-European civilizations. Linguistics offered one method whereby the ancient glories of the world could be assimilated into European achievement and the line maintained between the ‘cultivated’, the ‘semi-cultivated’ and the ‘wholly uncultivated and barbarous’ languages and peoples of the world (Williams 1877: 8–9). The sense of Europe as the centre of the civilized world was maintained by linking its culture and language to a lost civilization of long ago, the ethical precepts of which only the Europeans had maintained. Behind the swastika

in China one could find the cross (Gaillard 1893). Colonialism was therefore conceptualized by some as the restoration of the great but fallen branches of humanity, i.e. the civilizations of India and China that had deviated from the path of truth and enlightenment. However the discontents of Western civilization have been such that some have gone further to claim that it is ‘we’ moderns who have lost what ‘they’ the ancients or the primitives have retained.

The academic disciplines were thus involved in an attempt at restoration, one that included a complex identification with the cultures of the East, interpreted through particular systems of thought such as Christianity. Thus Max Müller, who could be described as a fellow-traveller and rival of the theosophists, defended Buddhism from the charge that its concept of *nirvāna* was nihilistic. For while Buddhism had its ‘metaphysical phantasmagorias’, there was another side ‘the beautiful, the tender, the humanly true, which like pure gold, lies buried in all religions, even in the soul of the Buddhist canon’ (1869: 18). Müller’s *Biographies of words and the home of the Aryas* contains the following hymn to words as repositories of the secrets of the human mind:

Our words are not rough, unhewn stones, left at our door by a glacial moraine; they are blocks that have been brought to light by immense labour, that have been carved, measured and weighted again, before they became what we find them to be. Our poets make poems out of words, but every word, if carefully examined, will turn out to be itself a petrified poem, a reward of a deed done or a thought thought by those to whom we owe the whole of our intellectual inheritance, the capital on which we live, with which we speculate and strive to grow richer from day to day.

(1888: x)

Etymologies are stories, they are lost histories of the human races. They can be used to revitalize our language and restore our stale metaphors.

Theosophy can be seen an extension of nineteenth century ‘Orientalism’. Theosophists were critical of British colonial practice, especially in India. Yet they were also missionaries, though – paradoxically – missionaries of Indian culture and philosophy to India. While theosophy emphasized the universal brotherhood of all human beings, it was also built on esoteric knowledge and the unlocking of ancient secrets held by high caste initiates: Blavatsky dedicated her work *The voice of silence* ‘to the few’ ([1889] 1976). Theosophy was part of speculations about ancient and noble races, whose cultural treasures had been lost or overwhelmed by the mass movements of history. It shared key ideas with Freemasonry (in particular about the ancient mysteries of mankind), and the Masonic view of world history and nineteenth century linguistics are evident

in the researches of generations of colonial linguists and historians from Holland, France and Britain.²³

Crews, reviewing Washington (1994), Goodrick-Clarke (1992) and Noll (1994), sums up some of the links from theosophy to fascism and Nazism as follows:

Washington perceptively glimpses an affinity between Gurdjieffian cruelty and the ethos of purgative primitivism that led D.H. Lawrence among others – and the later Yeats could have been mentioned in the same connection – to flirt with proto-fascist authoritarianism as an alternative to bourgeois soul-death. Nor should we be surprised when occultism does link arms with reactionary ideologies. Sooner or later the gnostic habit of thought battens upon vitalism, belief in a life force that cries out to be unshackled from convention. And fascist doctrine stands ready to give vitalism a nationalistic and nostalgic twist: we must inhale the spirit of our warrior ancestors, who knew no democratic legalism and harbored no pity for the unfit and the foreign.

(1996b: 38)

Crews is careful to disassociate Blavatsky from Nazism, given that ‘she had a very different politics in mind’ and that ‘[t]he eclectic, self-amused, live-and-let-live Blavatsky would have been appalled by what she had accidentally set in motion’. Crews further draws a clear line between ‘generally harmless’ New Age practices and Nazi ideology (1996b: 38, 39); however a tour of internet sites under keywords such as ‘Aryan’, ‘Zoroastrianism’, ‘National Socialist Primer’, ‘Freespeech’, ‘White Living Space’, ‘Stormfront’ etc. might suggest otherwise. The National Socialist Primer, produced in the United States, states for example that ‘[m]any rightly view National Socialism as a re-emergent manifestation of the pre-Christian Aryan cosmology’.²⁴

Characterology

One pioneer of the measurement of human difference was the British psychologist Francis Galton (1822–1911). In the twentieth century the work of Eduard Spranger (1822–1920), involving the study of human body and personality types could be termed characterological (Spranger 1922). Ernst Kretschmer (1888–1964), like Galton, was concerned with the study of exceptional human ability, and also with the relationship between body type or structure and personality. This study of human difference also generally found its place within the study of human group difference in race theory. As with theosophy, the set of interpretative practices known as

characterology shade off into late nineteenth and early twentieth century intellectual currents both within mainstream academia and in popular science. Terms that are used for characterology in German include *Charakterologie*, *Charakterkunde*, *Ausdruckskunde*, *Ausdruckspsychologie* and *Menschenkunde*. Alfred Rosenberg used the term *Charakterforschung* (1934: 137).²⁵

The subtitle of McCormick's 1920 guide to characterology gives some idea of the range of subjects that could be termed characterological: 'an exact science embracing physiognomy, phrenology and pathognomy, reconstructed, amplified and amalgamated, and including views concerning memory and reason and the location of these faculties within the brain'. Characterology also extended to the study of handwriting (graphology), and had pretensions to being a science that could serve forensic ends. One branch of characterology that has been successful in being accepted in legal contexts is finger-printing. I.Q. tests, though more controversial, are also widely used in human assessment and selection.²⁶

As with vitalism and vitalistic metaphors, it is difficult to distinguish a defined intellectual movement ('characterology') from the general use of the word 'character' and 'characterize'. But, again, as with the term vitalism, I would argue that there are good reasons to look at linguistics as a specific form of characterology, and that it is useful to think about linguistic theory in the general context of the rise of disciplines of measurement, viz. the development of sub-disciplines within linguistics such as such 'typology'. Humboldt's central place in the development of the notion of 'national character' or 'mentality' also argues for a strong link between characterology and linguistics.

The key personality in the development of characterology as an identifiable discipline was Ludwig Klages.²⁷ A Berlin police order of 18 August 1934 banning clairvoyance, astrology and the interpretation of dreams explicitly excluded the 'scientific' study of graphology for the purpose of evaluating character.²⁸ Contemporary characterology (under a variety of names) has its home both in corporate recruiting strategies and in New Age self-development (palmistry, graphology, etc.).²⁹ In the Third Reich, the German army was much concerned with the development of evaluation tests (Geuter 1988). A broken Karl Bühler, released by the Gestapo on 7 May 1938, after his arrest on 23 March, typed out 'a painfully craven document' in which he pledged to work towards a 'characterology' that could be applied in military research (Sebeok 1981: 106).³⁰

An important journal in the evolution of characterology in Germany was the *Zeitschrift für Menschenkunde*, *Blätter für Charakterologie und angewandte Psychologie*, published together with the *Zentralblatt für Graphologie*. Jung published an article in the opening volume (1925), and it began with a number of famous names on the masthead, including Alfred Adler, Havelock Ellis, Thomas Mann³¹ and Stefan Zweig.

A series of articles in the *Zeitschrift für Menschenkunde* by Christian Rogge dealt with the

causes of language change and the relation of language to thought (Rogge 1930, 1931, 1932). Rogge makes a familiar argument against formal linguistics, and cites Vossler to the effect that ‘modern linguistics is a discipline that leaves out the speaking person’ (Rogge 1930: 329). Rogge argues that the individual is an active participant in language change, and that the thoughts and experiences of the language-user should be the object of study. For Rogge, thinking and speaking involve the same processes, and mutual understanding is achieved by the creation of a picture from a sound. This ‘real miracle’ is achieved since ‘our speech calls forth the same muscle and nerve movements in the hearer that we perform in ourselves’, i.e. though a symmetry of physiological processes in speaker and hearer (1930: 332). The study of Goethe’s linguistic ‘workshop’ can convince that ‘language is an unconscious activity and an acoustic representation of the real through the medium of sound’ (1932: 258).

While superficially Rogge’s emphasis on the active role of the individual is suggestive of a humanistic concern with language and language change, in fact the model is as deterministic as the Neogrammarian. Rogge’s emphasis on the semiotic union of the physical and the conceptual can be read in tandem with an increasing concern with race and race theory found in the journal through the 1930s. Accompanying this shift in emphasis was a narrowing of perspective. In a review of Alfred Rosenberg’s *Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Neuscheler compared race theory with the graphologist Ludwig Klages’ ‘Neovitalism’, and praised Rosenberg’s work as ground-breaking and written with masterful clarity (1932: 147, 150–1).³² The ‘bio-vitalist’ perspective on *Geist* is explicit in the title of Adolf Hösel’s article ‘Blut ist Geist’ (1935). H.F.K. Günther argued that for the Indo-Germanic peoples there was no body–soul duality (1934: 25).

The journal developed rapidly into a medium for the ideas of Ludwig Klages, and the Working Circle for Biocentric Research (Arbeits-Kreis biozentrische Forschung, AKBf). This group was formally constituted in 1933, and its ideas set out in the journal. From the United States, Baer (1941) attacked Klages for his anti-humanism, paganism and Romantic celebration of ‘dream, magic, night, vision, clairvoyance, intuition, experienced reality’ (1941: 122). She defined biocentricism as a rejection of both materialism and idealism, as ‘anti-logocentric’ (1941: 94), with the spirit or *Geist* seen as an intrusion in the life process. Life is ‘eternal flow, change, becoming, renewal, chaos’. Klages saw change in language as leading to a loss of meaning, to stale or faded metaphors. He argued for the need to restore old meanings, using the retrieved meaning in the determination of psychological interpretations (Baer 1941: 95).

Further criticism of characterology from America came from Wyatt and Teubner. They saw in Klages an enemy of the intellect, seen as ‘a superimposed and hostile power, asphyxiating the originally intuitive and prophetic mind of primeval man and culture’ (1944: 230), and an advocate

of the ‘revival of the symbolic language of primitive myth and folklore in order to provide an instrument for his *Ausdruckslehre* (science of expression) in the fields of graphology and bodily expression’ (1944: 231). They defined characterology, ‘the most favoured topic in German psychology’, as follows:

In this field the aforementioned universal trends and the specific political ideology of NS converge. The study of the ‘total’ personality by means of *Ausdruckskunde*, the interpretation of different modes of expression as indicative of dominant character traits offer again and again an occasion to affirm the unity of mind and body. Moreover, this approach gave aid and comfort to the political doctrine by introducing into psychology a system of pragmatism and, indeed, completely arbitrary values such as the ‘personality of the born leader.’

(Ibid.)

For Wyatt and Teubner, the failure of National Socialist psychology is a failure to follow the precepts and the methodology of science. This ‘disintegration of methodological standards’ can itself be studied by psychological investigation ‘of people who, under the impact of affective intoxication and fear are kept in a state of mass behavior, and of whom some happen to be psychologists’ (1944: 242).

The use of the term ‘anti-logocentric’ in connection with Klages the ‘logophobe’ (Kaltenbrunner 1969) offers – incidentally – a clue to intellectual lineage of the anti-logocentric movement of deconstruction, one which involves a vitalistic rejection of stale linguistic categories and traditional Western dichotomies, including the canons of Western logic and rationality. One direct link between vitalism and deconstruction is that made by Gilles Deleuze, who talks of Bergson’s *Élan vital* as ‘movement of differentiation’ (1988: 91–113). Another is the works of Paul de Man, who uses the notion of ‘vital force’ (*levenskracht* in Dutch) in discussion of the works of Ernst Jünger ([1942] 1988: 319–22). Deconstruction has its roots in Orientalism (the Western reception of Taoism, Zen Buddhism,³³ etc.), the vitalistic ‘decline of the West’ pessimism of Nietzsche and Spengler, and European fascism (Klages, Heidegger).³⁴ Fenollosa and Pound’s vitalistic attack on rigid Western modes of thinking derives from an Orientalist view of the Chinese language and writing system as ‘vital speech’, as not imposing artificial distinctions between ‘thing’ and ‘action’ (Fenollosa/Pound [1920] 1983: 17).

The clearest debt linguistics owes to characterology is the field of stylistics, which is an intellectual cousin of graphology, palmistry and the sciences of individual human measurement.³⁵ The racial stylistics of Niederstenbruch and Glässer should thus be studied as a branch of the

Ausdruckspsychologie of the Third Reich, itself a branch of the general European intellectual preoccupation with the relationship between national character and individual character. This was a discipline concerned with *Sprachcharakteristik* (Glässer 1940: 100, 108). The link between characterology and linguistics was also perceived by Malkiel, who, in criticism of Weisgerber's style, likened his writing 'to the tone of Bachofen's cosmogenic and characterological studies' (1974: 275n).

It should be stressed here once again that there is no simple relationship between characterology and Nazism/fascism. Leo Spitzer's avowed aim of creating 'a more rigorously scientific definition of an individual style' and tracing those traits 'aberrant from general usage' to their 'psychological root' is clearly characterological in a general sense (Spitzer 1988: 13), but there is nothing intrinsically fascistic about such a project.

New Age Nazism

In the twentieth century the movement of theosophy declined, but in another sense it was transformed and remodelled by thinkers such as Carl Gustav Jung. Jung, who started his academic career working on word-associations within the nascent tradition of experimental psychology (see Noll 1994: 146–8), came out of an intellectual milieu which included eroticism, mysticism (spiritualism, theosophy, Wagnerism, *völkisch* neopaganism), the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer and eastern philosophies of Buddhism and Hinduism (Noll 1994: 20). In the background was the movement of *Lebensreform* in Germany and the thought of Ernst Haeckel (Noll 1994: 47). Jung was part of a broad movement embodying an anti-materialist, evolutionary–vitalistic philosophy of life, linked with names like Nietzsche, Dilthey, Weininger, Spengler, Heidegger and Bergson (Noll 1994: 38–9, 142–3). To this one should add the secret Aryan cults of Ariosophy, which have been investigated in depth by Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke. Jung – the erstwhile follower and admirer of Sigmund Freud – has been accused of anti-Semitism, and of collaboration with the Nazi regime as president of the General Medical Society for Psychotherapy and editor of its journal the *Zentralblatt für Psychotherapie und ihre Grenzgebiete* until 1939.³⁶

One linguist with a profound interest in Anthroposophy was Heinz Kloss. After the war, Kloss produced a series of works on Rudolf Steiner's organicist social vision (Kloss 1955, 1981, 1983). More importantly, he published a work of anthroposophical-type philosophy in 1929 (1929b), which owed its most significant intellectual debt to Ernst Fuhrmann (1886–1956). In Fuhrmann's work we find once again the union of vitalism with Orientalism. Fuhrmann was the author of works on Chinese thought (1921) and a proponent of the vitalistic philosophy of

‘biogenesis’ (1943). This work (*Wort und Zahl*, ‘Word and number’), which Kloss published privately in Stuttgart, is a series of poems and essay-sketches on the topic of numbers and words, on ‘the biology of language’, ‘races’ etc. Kloss seems to suggest that there is a mutually formative cycle operating between language, the human body, race, territory and climate. Each is an elemental force that can shape the others.³⁷

There are also parallels between Steiner’s philosophy and Jost Trier’s evocation of an organic collective, a society of rhythm and order, in which there is no clear division of labour and no clear distinction between work and play. Trier, like Steiner, transcended the restrictive anxieties represented by the doctrine of the arbitrary nature of the sign.³⁸ That boundary has marked the line between scientific linguistics and speculative linguistics, setting the academic discipline apart from the poetic visionaries and the alchemists of language. But it is only as secure as the grip of the particular scientific discourse at a particular time; and one person’s scientific etymology is someone else’s wild fantasy.

Within National Socialist scholarship, Heinrich Himmler’s Ahnenerbe was involved in a wide range of activities, especially excavations, medicoracial investigations (including medical experiments on human subjects), homeopathy, symbol-research, German pre- and early history, and weapons research. One particular interest of Himmler’s was *Welteislehre* or ‘world ice teaching’, ‘the belief that “Aryans” had arrived fully formed from “heaven”, being preserved in “eternal ice” before stalking the earth armed with superhuman “electrical powers”’ (Burleigh and Wippermann 1991: 64–5). Emmerich sums up symbol-research as follows:

They hunted for runes and stone crucifixes, tombstones and other monuments in the earth, on urns, bells, swords, Scandinavian stick calendars, on household goods and work tools, in the half-timbering of houses, on gates, roof beams, gables, and roof tiles, on house and yard makers and stonemasons’ signs. The symbols which they thought they found there (and, of course, really did find), especially the sun wheels and the trees of life, were interpreted as unfalsified expressions of the Nordic race which came from pre-Christian cults. They were converted into healing signs, good-luck charms, and fertility symbols for the ‘National Socialist world-view’.

(1994: 49)

This symbol-research can be seen as ‘characterological’. It should be read together with Oswald Spengler’s remark that ‘the house is the purest expression of race’ ([1922] 1993: 698), and with the work of linguists such as Trier and Schier on house-building, house-style and landscape, and with the study of the relationship between ‘landscape’ and language, i.e. dialectology.

Himmler's passion for 'elite' secret societies, rune occultism, Aryan gnosticism, Germanic mythology, paganism and the like make him the most direct link between Nazism and the secret Aryan cults of Armanists, Ariosophists, theozoologists, and members of the Thule society (Gilbhard 1994) and the Edda society. Hitler's drive to build a mass movement, and the lessons he had learned from Marxist-Leninism about the role of the Party, made him impatient with small coteries of Aryan conspirators. Nonetheless they are an important part of the intellectual background to Nazism, and to a wide range of thinkers and social 'visionaries'. The intellectual impetus to the formation of these societies came from the writings of Aryan racial supremacists such as Guido von List and Rudolf von Sebottendorff (Goodrick-Clarke 1992). List's writings include works on language and linguistics, runology and speculations on the origins of the Aryans.³⁹ A linguist and folklorist from Darmstadt, Hermann Pfister-Schwaighusen,⁴⁰ was among the founders of the List society in 1905 (Goodrick-Clarke 1992: 43).

Himmler adopted Karl Maria Wiligut (later known as Weisthor) as his 'magus':

By virtue of his alleged possession of ancestral memory and an inspired representation of archaic Germanic traditions, he became the favoured mentor of Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler on mythological subjects and was given an official assignment for prehistorical research in the SS between 1933 and 1939.

(Goodrick-Clarke 1992: 177)

Like many of these Nordic gurus Wiligut was not only anti-Semitic but believed in conspiracies between Jews, Catholics and freemasons. He collaborated with Himmler on his Wewelsburg project in Westphalia, under which the castle, initially destined to be a museum and SS officers' college for ideological education within the Race and Settlement Main Office, would become an SS order-castle, 'comparable to the Marienburg of the medieval Teutonic Knights' (Goodrick-Clarke 1992: 186; Padfield 1990: 248–9). He also worked on the whole question of the rituals that were to replace the cycle of Christian festivals⁴¹ (Padfield 1990: 174–5).

However, lest we dismiss Himmler as simply a crank,⁴² it is worth recalling that his academic dean of studies was professor Walther Wüst⁴³ of Munich University, editor of *Wörter und Sachen*. Wüst is thus one of many links between linguistics and Ariosophy, and he occupied a key position at the heart of the Nazi academic establishment. In a lecture to a branch of the Führerkorps of the SS, Wüst made the link between Aryan philosophy, the rejection of the Jewish/Christian vale of tears and Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. His argument was reported as follows:

In this context an important set of historical developments were elaborated that stretch out in firm continuity down the millennia between the most ancient Aryan wisdom and the Führer's book *Mein Kampf*. The fundamental formative force of all this is now as then the common racial make-up, which for example expresses itself in the same way in the life story of the Aryan sun-hero Buddha and that of the Führer.⁴⁴

Wüst's evocation of a world view through etymology, his use of Sanskrit to evoke an organic world of integration and natural growth (in contrast to Jewish abstractedness); his view of the Indo-European God as 'father', the father of the racial group, the *Sippe* or clan; his rejection of the idea that Buddhism was nihilistic (Buddha, he says, chose the middle way); all this puts him within Ariosophy, and links Ariosophy, Nazism and linguistics in an unambiguous way. Wüst recorded himself on official forms as a 'believer in God, formerly Protestant',⁴⁵ thereby reflecting his commitment to the Nazi New Age. Wüst was committed to reanimating the precious Indo-Germanic heritage, to transforming it from an arcane doctrine into a living belief system for those who seek greater understanding (Schrötter and Wüst 1938).⁴⁶

It is important to stress that the advocacy of an Indo-Germanic or Aryan religion was part of the wider ideology of mother-tongue. For if the Aryan mother-tongue was the repository of values and the accumulated wisdom of the ancestors, that wisdom could be reconstructed. Linguistics could point to 'foreign' elements, distinguish Latinate or Church coinages, and play a central role in the freeing of the mother-tongue and mother-tongue religion from the despotism of the universal church (Wachler 1931; Mandel 1942).

These scholars of the 'Nazi New Age' (Wüst, Kloss) were, however, committed to high standards in scholarship, and often drew the line between authentic scholarship and speculation in a way indistinguishable from their predecessors and successors. Helmut Arntz, in a discussion of the dating of runic writing, answered the question 'Runes: the original script of mankind?' in the negative, pouring scholarly cold water on speculative comparisons between runes and other writing systems in the same way as a historical linguist might reject speculative etymologies, and criticizing attempts by the likes of R. Freiherr von Lichtenberg, Herman Wirth, Gustav Neckel and K. Weigel to push back the origin of runes into the prehistory of the Indo-Germanic peoples (Arntz 1943: 125). Wüst distinguished himself from 'amateurs, charlatans, and ignorant nonspecialists' (Pollock 1993: 89), and – at least in his own eyes – was committed to debate and free discussion.⁴⁷ His work belongs not only to the history of linguistics, but to Western Indology: 'From its colonial origins in Justice Sir William to its consummation in SS Obersturmführer Wüst, Sanskrit and Indian studies have contributed directly to consolidating and sustaining programs of

domination' (Pollock 1993: 111). Wüst is the link between the Aryan dreamers of Ariosophy and the Thule Society, academic Indology, the re-constructive project of linguistics, and the new 'modern' scholarly elite of Nazi Germany under Heinrich Himmler.

Pollock (1993: 120) records that he has 'looked in vain for any detailed socio-political analysis of the term "Arier" in the NS period'.⁴⁸ One important text for such a study would be Hans Siegert's article on the history of the concept, 'Aryan', published in the journal *Wörter und Sachen* (Siegert 1941/2). For linguists under National Socialism by no means condoned the everyday use of the term Aryan. The commitment to scholarly standards was reflected in a desire to control and monitor the use of the word Aryan, and a degree of suspicion towards its popular use in Nazi Germany. In fact, as Hans Siegert pointed out (1941/2: 99), no less an authority than the chief ideologue of race in National Socialist Germany, H.F.K. Günther, objected to its misuse. Günther had long since concluded that the word 'Aryan' had become unusable in scientific discourse (1930: 14). Siegert's article opens with the statement that 'The word "Aryan" in the sense of "non-Jewish" is familiar to every German; but only a few people are aware of its other meanings, not to speak of the evolution of its meaning' (1941/2: 73). Here Siegert echoes Wüst, who had written that 'by reason of the laws of racial protection [Aryan] has become more familiar than any other word in the German language' (1934, quoted in Pollock 1993: 89). Siegert adds in a footnote: 'For example, I have had repeated occasion to observe that not even students of philology have any concept of what a "Seminar for Aryan culture and linguistics" might represent.' The article is also by any standards a work of scholarship, displaying impressive erudition and free of polemics. It passes from the cool opening sentence directly into a dense discussion of the history of the term 'Aryan'. The message of Siegert's article is that linguists and others have created a terrible terminological confusion, an appalling *Sprachverwirrung*. He recommends in his conclusion that scholars of language and race simply cease to use the term, noting also that it does not appear in the Nuremberg Laws. Whether the popular use of the term to mean 'of German and German-related blood'⁴⁹ can be eliminated is unclear (1941/2: 99). Siegert suggested in a footnote that the neologism *teutisch* in the sense of 'belonging to one's own people' could be introduced, noting that Grimm had once proposed replacing *germanisch* with an archaic form of *deutsch*, namely *thiotisch* (1941/2: 99n).

This is however in no sense a daring attack on National Socialist orthodoxy (*pace* Koerner 1989a: 170); it was published in a journal edited by Siegert's mentor at the University of Munich, Walther Wüst (standing in for Hermann Güntert), a journal with the names of R. von Kienle,⁵⁰ W. Porzig, K. Stegmann von Pritzwald and L. Weisgerber on its title page. Siegert was a member of the NSDAP, and active in a wide range of Nazi organizations.⁵¹

Polemics aimed at Nazi scholarship on this and many other issues do not confront the texts

themselves; they are simple caricatures, restricting Aryanism in its various forms to the ‘misuse’ of the term by ‘German demagogues in the 1930s’ (Basham 1979: 1). In this they are ignoring a long tradition of philological inquiry, one that includes a massive literature in English and French.⁵² Field (1981: 202) quotes the opponent of racism, Jean Finot, as follows (1906): ‘out of a thousand educated Europeans, 999 are persuaded of the authenticity of their Aryan origins’. To this one can add that ideas from eugenics, physical anthropology and the like were widely accepted in Europe and North America by intellectuals of many political backgrounds and national affiliations, including Jews.⁵³

While it is difficult to get an overall impression of this matter, it is evident that a substantial number of German academics in the Third Reich did not wish the word ‘Aryan’ to be used loosely in academic discourse. For example, Gerhard von Tevenar, reviewing Hoops (1940), urges the author not to refer to the pre-Celtic population of Ireland as ‘non-Aryan’, noting that we would not want to begin to stamp the Japanese or the Basques as non-Aryan. He suggests a more politically neutral term be used, noting that in linguistics the designation ‘non-Indo-Germanic’ or ‘pre-Indo-Germanic’ has been adopted and that race theorists also use the term *mediterranean* (‘Mediterranean’) to refer to the pre-Celtic elements in the Iberians (*Iberer*) or ‘Megalith-Leute’ (1941b: 405).⁵⁴ Walther Schulz⁵⁵ (1936: 2), discussing possible designations for original forebears (*Urvolk*), rejected the favoured term of foreign scholars, *Indo-Europäer*, as imprecise. The term *Arier*, which was used by race theorists, was already in use as a designation for the Indo-Germans of Asia, and was thus liable to cause confusion; Schulz therefore favoured *Indogermanen*, a term that was used originally for a linguistic community, and then applied to a people (*Volk*). Schulz is quite clear that the original impulse to the study of Indo-Germanic people as a people with a common origin, homeland, etc. lay with linguistics, specifically with Bopp’s recognition of a linguistic unity (1936: 1).⁵⁶ One linguist who did argue in favour of the ‘Nazi-use’ of the term ‘Aryan’ was Eduard Hermann (see Maas 1988a: 269, discussing Hermann 1937).⁵⁷ Some linguists were proud that their discipline had produced the term ‘Aryan’⁵⁸ (Debrunner 1934). The worry was, however, that they would be held accountable to the widespread ‘unscientific’ usage of the term to mean ‘non-Jewish’. At issue in these debates is control over the terminology of learned discourse, the policing of disciplinary boundaries (i.e. between linguistics and physical anthropology) and anxiety about the nature of the line between professional and popular discourse about language.

LINGUISTICS, RACE AND THE HORROR OF ASSIMILATION

‘Linguistic and racial identity should not be confused with one another.’

(H.F.K. Günther 1930: 13)

Introduction

In this final chapter texts from a number of different periods are discussed. The aim here is to clarify the logic of certain positions, not to present an ordered historical chain of influences and political causes and effects. The history and politics of these concepts is complex, and interwoven with debates in nineteenth century Europe about colonialism, nationalism, historical and biological theories of evolution, religion, human equality and perfectibility. Thus the literature presented here represents only a small selection, and in focusing on these texts I wish to show how difficult it is to identify what a progressive politics of language and race has been, or could be. In particular, I wish to show that mother-tongue fascism was the contribution linguistics made to Nazism.

Human unity, human diversity and linguistics

The history of linguistics has been almost universally cast in a positive light by linguists and the discipline of linguistics and the categorizations, principles and methodologies that it represents have escaped the opprobrium heaped upon the study of race. The study of race and the study of language are entangled historically in complex ways, but questions of race have been largely read out of the history of linguistics. Nazi linguistics is dismissed as an aberration, a brief period in which linguistic classifications were given a racial basis. But both linguistics and race theory have been associated with chauvinism, group narcissism, cultural solipsism; each was implicated in the cultural politics of Nazi Germany. Both have adopted the mantle of modern science, with the avowed aim of improving upon the vague and imprecise categories that ordinary people construct. It is hard to see why a science of linguistic classification should be respectable, while a science of

racial classification is viewed with suspicion. Either both are scientific activities, or neither is. The Nazi racial theorist H.F.K. Günther (who trained as an Indo-Europeanist) complained that visual acuity in racial matters was sorely lacking, and aimed to educate the eye for racial characteristics (1933: 1–3); linguists observe or lament the vagueness of concepts such as language, dialect etc., but seek a meta-language in which these problems are abstracted away, creating a set of idealizations that capture the order hidden below the chaos (found, depending on taste, in the structures of the mind, the biology of the brain, in language as ‘an abstract system’, etc.). Once the analysis is underway, ‘renewal of connection’ with the lay terms is achieved, and ‘language’, ‘native speaker’, ‘dialect’, ‘French’, ‘German’ etc. are used as technical terms in the analysis of linguistic phenomena. More remarkably, the vagueness of terms like ‘dialect’ is presented as a misfortune or an obstacle in the creation of an objective meta-language to describe language.

Linguistics in the eighteenth and nineteenth century was one of many disciplines struggling to understand and encompass the nature of human history, evolution and contemporary diversity. One important element in this was the so-called ‘Humboldtian tradition’. While Humboldt (1836) was committed to the unity of the human species, that unity was made up of nations with different characteristics or personalities. These differences were related to environment and race, but the rhetorical emphasis in Humboldt (as in Weisgerber) is on the language. Linguistics in the Humboldtian tradition, while concerned with linguistic and cultural diversity and with the study of non-Indo-European languages, seemed to combine evolutionary assumptions with the contradictory notion that national characteristics were fixed and immutable. Each language has its own unique point of view, and the unity of these diversities is the full expression of the human spirit; yet at the same time there is a hierarchy within the diversity. The tension between egalitarian relativism and nationalism or chauvinism is given with Weisgerber’s intellectual heritage. Weisgerber differs from it in his (relative) lack of involvement with so-called ‘exotic’ languages. However in his early work he discussed the language situation of children and aphasics, who serve as ‘exotic’ contrasts with the developed linguistic and conceptual skills of normal speakers.

Pott’s (1856) discussion of the ideas of the arch-reactionary Gobineau is sceptical, yet this work does not mark a break of any kind with the nineteenth century tradition of racial theorizing. Pott is committed to the link between race and language, to the extent that he is at a loss to explain how two racially distinct peoples can come to be speaking cognate languages, for instance Mongols and Turks (1856: 146–7). Pott is as opposed to a universal language (1856: 167–8) as he is worried by the disparate ethnic make-up of the *Mischreich* Austria (1856: 179–80). In the conclusion Pott automatically makes language the measure of national identity (1856: 183). Underlying Pott’s discussion is an ideal of racial, national and linguistic unity; these categories do not coincide in reality, but in historical reconstruction or in some ideal theoretical space, they

should coincide (1985: 156). In the modern city, the *Grossstadt*, like London, Paris or now Vienna, linguistic and racial levelling takes place (1856: 28–9). These ideas were shared in part not only by Gobineau, but by Hitler himself.

The opening section of the *Mein Kampf* depicts the struggle of the Germans to retain leadership in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and to protect their language and culture (1992¹: 10–11): ‘Only a handful of Germans in the Reich had the slightest conception of the eternal and merciless struggle for the German language, German schools, and a German way of life’. Given his attitudes to race, Hitler did not wish to see the other peoples of Austria adopt German, rather he hoped that the chaos of the Hapsburg Empire would end in the absorption of the Germans into a panGerman Reich: ‘The more the linguistic Babel corroded and disorganized parliament, the closer drew the inevitable hour of the disintegration of this Babylonian Empire, and with it the hour of freedom for my German-Austrian people’ (1992: 35). Describing the style of the Social Democrats’ literature, Hitler writes of the ‘new-fangled petti-fogging phraseology [. . .] an enormous expenditure of words, unclear in content or incomprehensible as to meaning, they stammer an endless hodgepodge of phrases purportedly as witty as in reality they are meaningless’ (1992: 47). This was the language of ‘decadent metropolitan bohemians’. Hitler identified linguistically with Bavaria (1992: 113): ‘The German of my youth was the dialect of Lower Bavaria; I could neither forget it nor learn the Viennese jargon. The longer I lived in this city, the more my hatred grew for the foreign mixture of peoples which had begun to corrode this old site of German culture.’ Hitler’s feelings of coming home to a real German city when he arrived in Munich in 1912 were strengthened by a feeling of linguistic affinity (1992: 116): ‘In addition, the dialect, much closer to me, which particularly in my contacts with Lower Bavarians, reminded me of my former childhood.’

However in his historical context, Port was a progressive, a bourgeois liberal anxious not to condemn whole nations to the dustbin of history in the style of the reactionary Gobineau.²

Von der Gabelentz, the general linguist and sinologist, made the unequivocal affirmation that different races have different intellectual abilities (1901: 395). However he denied that language can be judged by any indicators that lie outside language; we cannot link specific linguistic features to specific traits of national character or living conditions (*ibid.*). We must look for the inner form that is behind the outer form of word and letter (1901: 396). Gabelentz challenged the uniformitarianism of the Neogrammarians, arguing that we cannot assume that the paradigm that has led to the articulation of sound laws within Indo-European can be applied to other language groups (1894: 2).

A more recent link in this Humboldtian chain is Adolf Bach’s survey of German dialectology (1950), where it is argued that there can be little doubt about the link between the production of

speech sounds, including sound laws, and race. While sceptical about the explanations offered in various cases, Bach is categorical that there is an indirect link of some kind. In contrast to animals, the relation between race and language is mediated by culture, though of course culture is a property of a race. Bach concludes however that, at least as far as Western Europe is concerned, there is no problem of adaptability between languages (1950: 35–7). In a later discussion, Bach dismisses the possibility of racial influences in sound changes in German, but affirms that national temperament, which is a reflection of race, clearly affects speech patterns, rhythm and tempo. The Germans stand between the over-rational French and the emotional Poles as a balanced nation, characteristics which are reflected in the respective languages (1950: 286–7). Bach's work is notable for giving the number of Yiddish speakers in the world as 10 million (1950: 247), a figure which Römer points out is retained in the ninth edition of his *Geschichte der deutschen Sprache* of 1970 (Römer 1985: 92, 144, 160, 174, 176).

The Humboldtian tradition puts the prime emphasis on language as a defining national identity, but the factors of national habitat and racial inheritance, however vaguely understood, are also important to an understanding of the *Volk*. But the distinction between the spiritual and the material within this tradition is not absolute; far from it. History is understood as the causally imponderable action of *Geist* on the world and the world upon *Geist*: these are Humboldt's 'unfathomable causes' (1836: 12). This tradition emerged before nineteenth century biological materialism, and the choice between *Volk* as a racial unit and as a cultural–linguistic unity was not present explicitly as a definitional dilemma.

As the nineteenth century progressed, the conflation or lack of clarity about the relation between language and race came under critical scrutiny, no doubt in part as a result of the development of a science of biological race with its own terminology of classification and its own methodology. The new science of race felt obliged to disassociate itself from linguistics, given the immense influence of linguistics on the emerging science. The physical anthropologist and phrenologist Paul Broca wrote in 1862 that 'the linguistic specialists have one great advantage over us: they can do without us whereas we cannot do without them [. . .] We are, therefore, the vassals of linguistics and grateful vassals; but we must not be, we cannot be, its slaves' (quoted in Poliakov 1974: 257).³ Poliakov begins his discussion of Aryan theorizing with the sub-title 'The tyranny of linguistics' (1974: 255). Broca's work provides one link between the physical (i.e. racial) anthropology of the late nineteenth century, characterology, the attempt to grasp human personality ('inner form') by studying the contours of the face, the skull, etc. and linguistics ('Broca's aphasia').

As an example of the kind of 'confusion' between racial and linguistic categories that came later to be identified one could cite from Lepsius:

From the relations of separate languages, or groups of languages, to one another, we may discover the original and more or less intimate affinity of the nations themselves. We learn, for instance, by this means, that the Indians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Slavonians, and Germans form a catenarian series whose parts are far more intimately connected with one another than any link of the chain, which consists of the Babylonians, Hebrews, Phoenicians, Arabs, Abyssinians [. . .].

(1863: 24)

There was a growing need for precision to meet the demands of the new disciplinary split. There developed a strong consensus within both physical anthropology and linguistics that ‘race has too often been confused with language’ (Pittard 1927: 46), and this was in effect a polemic against preethnological linguistic research. In discussing the problems of using race to understand history, Pittard noted that nonetheless,

contrary to what many people imagine, the domain of Ethnology is by no means a chaos. Our classifications are not final, far from it. [. . .] But how far we have come in the last fifty years! Where once there seemed to be nothing but disorder and lack of precision, order has gradually been established and we are approaching clarity’.

(1927: 469–70)

Both linguistics and ethnology (physical anthropology) have established classificatory facts, and while their classifications should not be confused, nevertheless anthropologists should ‘accord full linguistic attention to the linguistic facts’ and philologists ‘should exhibit the same attitude in the face of the facts of anthropology’ (1927: 53).

Ironically, the assertion of a racial unity to the Indo-Europeans could be, from the perspective of the nineteenth century, more progressive than its denial.⁴ For if all speakers of Indo-European languages were racially related, then they were all of one common family.⁵ Canon F.W. Farrar⁶ (1831–1903) put Sir William Jones’ conjecture and the subsequent labours of philology in the context of a critique of the excesses of British rule in India:

Fifty years ago, few would have believed that Dutch, and Russian, and Icelandic, and Greek, and Latin, and Persian, and Mahratti, and French, and English, were all indubitable developments from one and the same original tongue, and that the common ancestors of the nations who speak them were – in times that may almost be called historical – in

times, at any rate, the reality of which can be rigidly tested by the microscope and the spectrum analysis of Philology – were living together as an undivided family in the same pastoral tents. In the present day, no one doubts the fact, except a few intrepid theologians.

(1878: 306–7)

Here the science of language, the historical and comparative method, is the key to the history of the races. For philology has a method of analysis that is objective, one that is akin to methods of the natural sciences, and that has led to a rediscovery of common bonds.

When we look at the table which is before us [showing the branches of the Indo-European language family], [. . .] it is but a concise statement of the astonishing truth, that we Europeans, together with the Persians and Hindoos, however wide may be the apparent and superficial differences between us, are, nevertheless, members of a close and common brotherhood in the great families of nations. First westward and northward, afterwards eastward and southward, the Aryans extended; they forgot the rock from whence they were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence they were digged: they became wholly ignorant of their mutual relationship; and when, in their various emigrations, they met each other – like the lion-whelps of a common lair – they met each other no longer as brothers but as foes: yet brothers they were; and now, at least, the science of language has restored to them the knowledge of this unsuspected truth.

(Farrar 1878: 306–7)

British imperialism in India, though animated by the best of motives, had, argued Farrar, been too tactless and too inflexible, and on occasion brutal to the Hindus, ‘calling them and treating them as “niggers” [and] absorbing with such fatal facility the preposterous notion that they were, with few exceptions, an abject nation of cringing liars, to be despised and kicked’ (1878: 303). Had the common racial bonds been recognized, British imperialism in India might have been seen in a different light, would not have had to be enforced by ‘military despotism’:

then, indeed, the Hindoos no less than ourselves would have recognized the bond of unity between us because of the common ancestors from whose loins we both alike are sprung, and we no less than they should have seen that in coming to Hindostan with our advanced civilization, we were returning home with splendid gifts to visit a member of

one common family, and that the meeting between us was but the meeting of Esau and Jacob after long years of separation, – who met each other with mutual affection and the kiss of peace, although from the womb it had been prophesied respecting them that *‘the elder should serve the younger.’*

(1878: 304; original emphasis)

While this is the rhetoric of colonialism and the ‘white man’s burden’, in which Britain appears ‘as the model Aryan nation’ (Leopold 1970: 283), it implies that what stands between the ‘Hindoo’ and civilization is culture not race. Farrar argued that Indian institutions condemned by British officials and missionaries such as *suttee* and the caste system ‘derive no sanction from the Vedas’. Indian civilization had fallen into the hands of ‘an arrogant and usurping sacerdotalism’ foreign to its true nature (1878: 304).

Farrar’s view of history and progress is dialectical. Without the Chinese and Egyptian civilizations, human beings would have remained in a primitive stage of development seen in the savage races of the world who have left no mark on world history and culture. However, without the Aryan and the Semite, civilization would not have gone beyond ‘the placid sensuality of China [and] the Negritian cruelty of Egypt’. The combination of Semitic religious ethics and Aryan science and energy is destined to lead the world in the next phase, one in which the inferior races will nonetheless have a place ‘as the other sheep of his Redeemer’. In time, ‘a yet loftier and lovelier type of humanity’ may emerge, and the Aryan will yield having played a part in the ultimate purpose: ‘the physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual elevation of Humanity itself’ (1878: 403).

For those who believed that the languages of the world were descended from one language, and the speakers of those languages from one race, it is evident that there could be no question about the intrinsic racial superiority of one group over another. This notion was indeed a prerequisite for some conceptions of colonialism: ‘When the European goes into the other continents of the world, as traveller, colonist, missionary, and civilizer, he meets everywhere with men of the same race’ (Edkins 1871: 394). Edkins quotes Max Müller’s *Lectures in the science of religion* on this fundamental human unity:

Nay, if we look but steadily into those black Chinese eyes, we shall find that there, too, there is a soul that responds to a soul and that the God whom they *mean* is the same God who we *mean*, however helpless their utterance, however imperfect their worship.

(1871: 394–5)

Edkins adds: ‘Language proves them to be one with ourselves. The black, the yellow, the copper-coloured, and the brown races come of one stock. If the yellow and the white can by linguistic proofs be shown to be one, the presumption will be strong that the same is true of all.’ For Edkins, ‘the vocabularies of the east and west are essentially the same’ (1871: 402).

This fundamental equality does not of course imply that all the descendants of Adam are at the same level of civilization, but it does imply that they could be, with the help of England under the guidance of Divine Providence:

It is the duty, as it is the destiny, of the nations of Europe to give back to the east the treasure of heavenly light which they once received from it. To Asia they owe the first impulses to thought, the earliest lessons in the arts, the invention of writing, and the priceless deposit of divine revelation. [. . .] England has received the rule of India for this purpose, that she may become the teacher and evangelizer of India. Commerce and war have opened the gates of China, that Christian truth may enter them. All new facts, therefore, should be welcome that tend to show that the Chinese are one with us in origin, and that their history, their institutions, their language even, derive their source, as ours do, from Western Asia. Let the kindly sympathy of the west for the east be the more called forth as the proofs of common brotherhood are accumulated.

(1871: 402–3)

Of course, given the Indian caste system, there was always room for ambiguity about who in India was an Aryan brother, and who was not. As conceived by Max Müller, colonialism was a second ‘Aryan invasion’, one which would redeem India from the ‘gross immorality and superstition’ into which it had fallen. The first invasions by Indo-Europeans had taken place ‘long before the dawn of true history’ and led to a morally pure religious system, the ‘Vedic religion’, being set up; now, once again ‘the conquerors were establishing themselves as an elitist military aristocracy under the banner of a morally pure religion (Christianity)’ (Leach 1990: 235).

Whitney on race and language

For the Sanskritist William Dwight Whitney (1827–94), the question of race and language arises in the context of a discussion of arbitrariness. There is no relationship between ‘any word and the idea represented by it excepting a mental association which we had ourselves formed, under the guidance, and in obedience to the example of those about us’. We learn our language from those around us as we are growing up, and it is evident that race and blood ‘had nothing to do directly

with determining our language. English descent would never have made us talk English'. The following quotation is characteristic for linguists' discussions of the question of language and race:

An American or English mother, anxious that her child should grow up duly accomplished, gives it a French nurse, and takes care that no English word be spoken in its presence; and not all the blood of all the Joneses can save it from talking French first, as if this were indeed its own mother-tongue. An infant is taken alive from the arms of its drowned mother, the only waif cast upon the shore from the wreck of a strange vessel; and it learns the tongue of its foster-parents; no outbreak of natural and hereditary speech ever betrays from what land it derived its birth.

(1867: 14–15)

This principle then applies to immigrants to the United States, and to the effects of political oppression:

The Babel of dialects brought every year to our shores by the thousands of foreigners who come to seek a new home among us, disappear in as brief a time, or are kept up only where those who speak them herd together in separate communities. The Irish peasantry, mingled with and domineered over by English colonists, governed under English institutions, feeling the whole weight, for good and for evil, of a superior English civilization, incapacitated from rising above a condition of poverty and ignorance without command of English speech, unlearn by degrees their native Celtic tongue, and adopt the dialect of the ruling and cultivated class.

(1867: 15)

It might seem that there the matter is closed, that 'it does not seem practicable to lay down any system of physical races which shall agree with any possible scheme of linguistic races' (1867: 370). But it is at this point that the discussion of language and race in fact begins in earnest. The problem is formulated as follows: how can we reconcile the serious discrepancy between 'the linguistic and physical evidence of race'. For:

Some method of bringing about a reconciliation between them must evidently be sought and found. For neither linguistic nor physical ethnology is a science of classification merely; both claim to be historical also. Both are working toward the same end: namely, a tracing out of the actual connection and genealogical history of human races; and,

though each must follow its own methods, without undue interference from without, they cannot labour independently, careless each of the other's results.

(1867: 371)

Whitney recognizes that we cannot say that 'speech is to man what his song is to the bird'; nor that 'an Englishman, a Frenchman, and a Chinaman talk unlike one another because their brains and organs of articulation are unlike'. We know that immigrants to America are 'absorbed by one great community, and made to adopt its speech' (1867: 372), we know that history has erased languages from the face of the earth, through the annihilation of the speakers or through their linguistic assimilation. Mixing of language is itself proof of mixture of races, witness the history of English. But these objections are not adduced by Whitney to demonstrate the implausibility of tracing the history of peoples through the history of languages. On the contrary, these difficulties must be appreciated by a careful scholar, but they are exceptions: '[i]t still remains true that, upon the whole, language is a tolerably sure indication of race' (1867: 373–4).

It becomes clear that the point about the ship-wrecked waif is two-edged. On the one hand, it shows from an extreme situation how there can be no talk of a natural link between language and race. But, of course, the story derives its force from the fact that it is an extreme case, that it does not offer a conventional picture of human socialization, any more than does the mother isolating her child completely from the language of the home, from the 'mother-tongue': '[s]ince the dawn of time, those among whom individuals were born, of whom they learned how to express their mental acts, have been usually of their own blood' (1867: 374). Linguistic evidence, it turns out, faces no greater difficulties than 'physical' evidence (i.e. evidence based on physical human type):

They [the difficulties] are, to no small extent, merely the effect, on the side of language, of the grand fact which comes in constantly to interfere with ethnological investigations of every kind: namely, that human races do not maintain themselves in purity, that men of different descent are all the time mingling, mixing their blood, and crossing all their race-characteristics. Fusion and replacement of languages are impossible, except when men of different native speech are brought together as members of the same community, so that there takes place more or less of an accompanying fusion of races also; and then the resulting language stands at least a chance of being a more faithful and intelligible witness of the mixture than the resulting physical type. That the modern French people, for example, is made up of a congeries of Celtic, Germanic and Italian elements is to a certain extent – although only the aid of recorded history enables us fully to

interpret the evidences – testified by the considerable body of Celtic and Germanic words mixed with the Latin elements of the French language; but no physicist could ever have derived the same conclusion from a study of the French type of structure.⁷

Physicists (i.e. physical anthropologists) argue that the infusion of blood from one race into another, if it is not sustained, may not leave lasting traces unless the ‘intruded element’ is continually supplied, whereas such an admixture may leave linguistic traces. Whitney continues to adduce exceptions to this thesis, such as the spread of Latin far beyond the bounds of the race to which it originally belonged. But, says Whitney, we should inquire into the causes of such a phenomenon, rather than assume that it is typical. In the case of Latin, it was only because it possessed ‘superior culture’ and a literature that it was able to sweep away the ‘primitive tongues’ of southern and central Europe: ‘[t]here was an organizing and assimilating force in Roman dominion which the world has nowhere else seen equalled’. The Persians, the Mongols, the German tribes had at different times extensive empires, but never had the same linguistic impact on the conquered peoples as did Latin. Even Greek failed to maintain a widespread presence. Arabic, which in some respects parallels Latin in its widespread impact, owes its success ‘not to the sword of Islam, but to the book, and to the doctrine and polity which the book enjoined and the sword imposed’ (1867: 375). The modern age ‘under the conditions of civilized life in the nineteenth century’ is not typical of human history, with its migrations and assimilation:

The wild and uncultivated races of the earth generally are simply maintaining themselves by growth from generation to generation, taking in no immigrants, sending out no emigrants. Culture makes an astonishing difference in the circumstances and fates of those portions of mankind over which its influence is extended, and it would be the height of folly to transfer to barbarous races and uncivilized periods of human history analogies and conclusions drawn from the history of cultivated nations and tongues. The further we go back into the night of the past, the greater is the probability that the limits of race and speech approximately coincide, and that mixture of either is accompanied by that of the other.

(1867: 375–6)

We need both linguistic and ‘physical’ evidence, since they can supplement each other. Whitney goes on to consider the nature of Indo-European, and the arguments around its relationship to race. Some scholars have argued that the case of Indo-European is not unlike that of Latin; it involves the spread of a civilization rather than a race. But Whitney rejects the assumption that

the cultural conditions pertaining at the time of the Romans could have held in the remote past.

This being so, we must assume that the spread of Indo-European must have followed the ‘usual causes which act among uncultivated tongues: that is to say, mainly by the growth, spread, and emigration of a single race.’ Qualifications aside, Whitney comes to the following conclusion:

But upon the whole, in the light of our present knowledge, we are justified in regarding the boundaries of Indo-European speech as approximately coinciding with those of race; the tie of language represents a tie of blood.

(1867: 379)

While there are problems with the use of both linguistic and physical evidence, in some respects evidence from language is the more certain. Linguistic evidence can be much more easily classified than observations of physical structure: ‘Linguistic facts admit of being readily collected, laid down with authentic fidelity, and compared coolly with little risk of error from subjective misapprehension’ (1867: 380). While it takes special and difficult training to become a race expert, ‘[a] few pages or phrases, often even a few words, brought back by a traveller or sojourner in distant lands from some people with which he has made acquaintance, are likely to be worth vastly more for fixing their place in the human family than the most elaborate account he can give of their physical characteristics’ (1867: 380). Whitney then gives various examples of how linguistic evidence revealed ethnological links otherwise obscure, such as the link between the Hottentot dialects and ancient Egyptian (1867: 381). But there is a more fundamental reason for the superiority of linguistic evidence over physical:

In every part and particle, it [language] is instinct with history. It is a picture of the internal life of the community to which it belongs; in it their capacities are exhibited, their characters expressed; it reflects their outward circumstances, records their experiences, indicates the grade of knowledge they have attained, exhibits their manners and institutions. Being itself an institution, shaped by their consenting though only half-conscious action, it is an important test of national endowment and disposition, like political constitution, like jural usage, like national art. Even where it fails to show strict ethnic descent, it shows race-history of another sort – the history of the influence which, by dint of superior character and culture, certain races have exercised over others. The spread of the Latin has swept away and obliterated some of the ancient landmarks of race, but it has done so by substituting another unity for that of descent;

its present ubiquity illustrates the unparalleled importance of Rome in the history of humanity.

(1867: 381–2)

For Whitney, ‘languages are made’ by communities, they are human institutions. This being so, human beings may introduce a disjunction into the relationship between language and race once they enter into historical self-consciousness, i.e. once they enter into culture. In this sense history records the major deviations between linguistic and racial categories:

Civilization facilitates mixture, as it does communication. It is not the wild and obscure races which are, or have ever been, mixing blood and mixing or shifting speech upon a grand scale; it is the cultivated ones. If one barbarous tribe overcomes another, unless the conquerors absorb the conquered into their own community, there is not usually a change of speech: but nations like the Romans and Arabs, who come with the force of an organized polity and a literature, extend their speech widely over strange peoples. Where the information derivable from language, therefore, is most needed, there it comes with the greatest presumption of accuracy.

(1875: 274–5)

The emergence of a rhetorical consensus

A volume on ‘the race question’ compiled under the auspices of UNESCO makes the point as follows:

The fundamental error of ‘Aryanism’ or ‘Nordism’ in all its forms lies in a confusion of ideas which is very wide-spread but by any reckoning unscientific: the term *race* is used indifferently as a synonym for *language* and *nation*.

(Comas 1961: 49)

The error that this allegedly produces is that of regarding terms for human groups like ‘Slav race’ and ‘Aryan race’ as not only ‘linguistically homogenous’ but ‘anthropologically uniform’ (ibid.). Comas (1961: 49) insists on the need to rigidly separate the terminologies of anthropology and linguistics, and Max Müller, having been one of the first to use the term ‘Aryan race’ is brought in to illustrate the ‘correct’ view:

To me an ethnologist who speaks of an Aryan race, Aryan blood, Aryan eyes and hair is as great a sinner as a linguist who speak of a dolichocephalic dictionary or a brachycephalic grammar.

In the course of a critique of Indo-European scholarship, Edmund Leach noted that in the 1850s Max Müller was still vague about the original Aryan language and the causes of its diffusion. He generally adhered to a distinction between the study of language and ‘ethnology’, writing in 1880 that ‘There are Aryan and Semitic languages, [but] it is against all rules of logic to speak, without an expressed or implied qualification, of an Aryan race, or Aryan skulls’ (quoted in Leach 1990: 234). In the same lecture in which he made this last statement, Müller ‘expressed his Germanic pride in the reunification of the German nation’ achieved by the annexation by Germany of Alsace, his ‘distinction between language and race’ here, as Leach points out, ‘clearly under strain’ (Leach 1990: 234–5).

In any case we are dealing here with an academic demarcation dispute; Müller is not attacking race theory *per se*. Notions of linguistic classification are left unchallenged, as are racial classifications. It is simply being asserted here that each discipline should stick to its own proper labels and not confuse physical types with linguistic groupings. Comas himself concludes:

There is indeed a group or family of related languages labelled ‘Indo-European’ or ‘Aryan’. Language, however, spreads and is transmitted from one people to another by migration, conquest and commercial exchanges, without, on that account, implying membership of the same biological human group by those speaking similar tongues.

(Ibid.)

The final statement drafted after the UNESCO conference in 1950 included a recommendation that the use of the term ‘race’ be dropped, and the term ‘ethnic group’ be adopted instead, given that ‘national, religious, geographic, linguistic and cultural groups do not necessarily coincide with racial groups’ ([UNESCO] 1961: 497).

As Pittard noted, both linguists and anthropologists were united in deploring the error of taking linguistic categories for racial ones (1927: 46). Against the background of the claims made for scientific racism, both in the United States and Europe, the American Anthropological Society passed a series of condemnatory resolutions in 1938 (see Benedict 1942: 166–7). The first resolution stated: ‘Race involves the inheritance of similar physical variations by large groups of mankind, but its psychological and cultural connotations, if they exist, have not been ascertained

by science.’ This is carefully worded, and falls short of denying outright a link between physical type and psychological and cultural type. The second resolution stated that ‘[t]he terms “Aryan” and “Semitic” have no racial significance whatsoever. They simply denote linguistic families’. Here we see the familiar reification of linguistic classifications. The third resolution proclaimed that anthropology ‘provides no scientific basis for discrimination against any people on the ground of racial inferiority, religious affiliation, or linguistic heritage’, thereby recognizing that people were being persecuted in grounds not only of race, but religion and language as well. If therefore one sees that people are being persecuted on the basis of many categories, including linguistic ones, then it would be logical to scrutinize not only racial categories but also linguistic ones.

Benedict gave the conventional argument that ‘race and language are not the same’. This was obvious ‘for not all who speak Arabic are Arabians and not all who speak English are of the White race’ (1942: 6). Race and language may coincide ‘among some primitive tribes’, though of course this does not establish the interdependence of racial and linguistic categories. Once again the view is that among races who have not yet entered history linguistic and racial boundaries will be isomorphic: ‘In prehistoric times the world was sparsely populated, and in isolated regions both physical type and language might become different from those in any other part of the world’ (1942: 7).

Laponce (1987: 120–6) arrives at much the same conclusion, for in correlating the bonds between standard languages and race he determines that only 12 languages are ‘multi-racial’. Although he shows how different results can be obtained using different categories, the basic message is that the further down the hierarchy of world languages we go (in terms of number of speakers, political importance, etc.), the greater the link between language and race. Boas notes that ‘[s]ameness of language is acquired under the same linguistic environment by members of the most diverse human types’. There is no relation between ‘social habits’ (of which language is one) and ‘racial position’ (1928: 106). While there exists a common human faculty of speech which is organically determined and therefore ‘instinctive’, ‘*what* we speak is determined solely by our environment’ [Boas’ emphasis]. In simple terms, we learn the language we hear around us, ‘[w]e acquire one language or another, according to what we hear spoken around us’ (1928: 136).

Robert Hall makes the point as follows:

We often hear it said that one sound or another is ‘impossible to pronounce’, or that innate differences of physiological structure make people of a certain race – say, the white race – inherently incapable of pronouncing certain sounds found in languages spoken by people of other races, such as Chinese or Japanese. This idea is quite

unfounded. A white child brought up exclusively among native speakers of Japanese or Chinese will speak exactly as he hears them speak, and fully as well – and the same will be true of a Japanese or Chinese child brought up speaking a West European language, as many Americans have undoubtedly observed in the case of the Nisei [second generation Japanese in the United States].

(1950: 66–7)

Similarly, Hall argued (1968: 19) that

[t]he child's contact with and use of language is [. . .] conditioned, from the earliest stages, by cultural transmission, in that he always imitates the actions of those around him. (No-one has ever demonstrated the existence of any in-born mechanism whereby every child produces specific sequences of sounds with specific meanings at the same stage of development.)

The human mind is not a *tabula rasa* at birth, '[t]here are certain in-born, genetically conditioned capacities, and also limitations, with which the newborn infant is endowed'. One of these innate capacities is that of symbolization, 'the ability to use one phenomenon (object, action, relationship) to stand for another' (1968: 17).

Race and sound-system

As Hall implies, there exists an extensive tradition of linking the phonetics of articulation to racial categories. Quoting a number of studies,⁸ Baker (1974: 117) affirms that '[t]he etymology and grammar of languages are passed on from one person to another in the course of life, but the phonetic element in speech depends in part on inherited characters, which make it difficult or easy to pronounce certain sounds'.⁹

At the turn of the century, Henry Cecil Wyld argued that members of all races could learn any human language if they started learning in childhood, and that 'structural differences' in the vocal organs of different races were less important than the habits acquired in infancy in determining the mother-tongue. However, Wyld asserted that what he termed 'speech basis' is related to the shape and structure of the vocal organs, and that therefore 'the more two races differ in physical type, the greater will be the difference in their natural speech habits'. In effect then, racial difference is one factor in linguistic difference and language change:

In this sense, the effect of foreign speakers in modifying the speech basis of a community will be in proportion to the degree of separation between the two races. The more unlike one race is to another in temperament and physical type, the greater will be the difference between the natural tendencies of their speech organs; the more considerable, therefore, the modification which the language of each will undergo in the mouths of speakers of the other race.

(1907: 87)

This factor is one that helps explain the changes that the Aryan mother-tongue underwent over time:

It used formerly to be assumed that, since affinity of language had been proved between Indians, Slavs, Germans, Greeks, Italians and Celts, it therefore also followed that ‘the same blood flowed in the veins’ of all. At the present time probably no impartial observer would suggest such a view. [. . .] Whether the original speakers of Primitive Aryan were fair, like some Swedes and Russians; or dark, like other Slavs, and like some of the speakers of Irish and Welsh at the present day; or whether the mother-tongue was spoken both by fair and dark races, does not primarily concern us. We are content to know that there was a mother-tongue, which, in the course of time, spread over an immense geographical area, and was acquired by people of various racial types, who lost their own language in consequence; a fact which was probably of significance in determining the particular line of deviation from the original form, which Aryan speech followed in different areas.

(1907: 172–3)

Some modern theorists have argued that there is indeed a genetic element in pronunciation of the kind envisaged by Grimm (see below), for example the Dutch dialectologist J. van Ginneken.¹⁰ This aspect of his work is discussed in Aptroot (1991). Van Ginneken included a chapter on the language of Jews in the Netherlands in his *Handboek der Nederlandsche taal*, in which he linked his anti-Semitic notions of the Jewish character and race to language. He described Jews as intelligent; however they only ‘use their intelligence to gain profits, they do not have noble feelings or any real creativity’; their syntax is ‘simple lines loosely connected by juxtaposition’ (1914: 6, translated and cited in Aptroot 1991: 47). Van Ginneken believed that racial type influenced pronunciation: ‘Van Ginneken attributes a nasal pronunciation to the typical form of Jewish noses, and the differing *s*-sounds and the lack of front rounded vowels to an aberrance in the shape of Jewish lips’ (Aptroot 1991: 48).

The case of the structuralist Ebehard Zwirner and the Third Reich should also be mentioned in this context. One project for which Zwirner sought funding involved the development of microphones for high-altitude use. Exact details of the experiments are unknown, but they were to make use of the same low pressure chamber that Sigmund Rascher later used in his notorious experiments on human subjects in Dachau. Zwirner's work with the German Linguistic Archive (Deutsches Spracharchiv) involved plans for research into 'hereditary and racial factors in speech production', with German Jewish and later Polish Jewish subjects (see Simon 1992; Lerchenmüller and Simon 1997: 71–2). Simon (1992: 258–9) reprints the text of a letter in which Zwirner set out his plans for the Archive:

In 1938 in order to study the inherited roots of speech production identical and non-identical twins were filmed and recorded in conjunction with Professor Wilhelm Fischer's Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institute for Physical Anthropology. In order to capture the racial aspects of the speech process, tape-recordings were prepared of German-speaking Jews, with the support of Party authorities. This work was done with in cooperation with the Institute for Jewish Research.

This search for racial correlates in speech was not as prevalent in the Third Reich as is generally assumed; nor, however, was Zwirner a half-educated amateur.

Race and ethnic group

This move from the term 'race' to 'ethnic group' recommended in the UNESCO report occurs in one landmark text in the history of linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale*. While the *Cours* is not overtly concerned with such matters, it is not as removed from them as the text book summaries would suggest. Saussure's mentor, the Celticist Adolphe Pictet (1799–1875), appears in histories of ideas about race as an Aryan apologist.¹¹

Saussure's position looks in fact rather like that of Whitney:¹²

It would be a mistake to believe that one can argue from a common language to consanguinity, or equate linguistic families with anthropological families. The facts are more complex. There is, for example, a Germanic race with very distinct anthropological features: fair hair, elongated skull, tall stature, etc. The Scandinavian type exemplifies it perfectly.

(Saussure [1922] 1983: 304)

This suggests that there does indeed exist a Germanic race, but that this category does not reflect a common consanguinity. Not all speakers of Germanic languages fit this description:

The Alemannic people at the foot of the Alps are very different anthropologically from Scandinavians. Could we say at least that a language in principle belongs to a given race, and that any others who speak it must have had it imposed upon them by conquest? Certainly we can find examples of nations adopting or having imposed upon them the language of their conquerors, as the Gauls did after being conquered by the Romans. But that does not explain everything. In the Germanic case, for instance, even granting that they subjugated so many peoples, they can hardly have absorbed all of those. That would have required a long period of prehistoric domination, and other conditions for which there is no established evidence. Thus consanguinity and common language appear to have no necessary connexion. It is impossible to argue from one to the other. Consequently, in the many cases where anthropological and linguistic evidence do not agree, it is not necessary to suppose they conflict, or to choose between them. Each has its own validity.

(Ibid.)

Here again the position is that the classifications of physical anthropologists and linguists do not necessarily have to coincide. However, Saussure, like Whitney, is unwilling to let go of linguistic criteria in establishing identity. Saussure poses the question of the status of linguistic evidence and what we can learn from it:

Racial unity in itself can only be a secondary factor and not a necessary condition where community of language is concerned. But there is another unity which is infinitely more important. It is the only essential unity, the unity constituted by social bonds: we shall call it *ethnicity* [ethnisme]. By this we understand a unity based upon the many connexions of religion, civilization, common defence, etc. which may become established between people of different races, without any political unification. Between ethnicity and a language there becomes established a mutual connexion of the kind mentioned earlier [. . .]. The social bond tends to bring about community of language, and perhaps gives the common language certain characteristics. Conversely, it is to some extent community of language which constitutes ethnic unity.

([1922] 1983: 306)

This suggests that ethnic identity, a sense of community, may be established between people who are not of the same race, but who develop cultural ties. This communality leads to linguistic unity, and linguistic unity constitutes or creates ethnic unity. The *Cours* suggests therefore that community identities are cultural unities, but also linguistic collectivities. This notion of identity can be used to reconstruct historical events. So what was lost with the incongruity of language and race can be regained with the congruity of language and ethnicity:

For example, in early Italy we find Etruscans side by side with Latins. Now if we wish to discover what they had in common, in the hope of proving them to be of the same origin, we can appeal to the evidence of everything they left behind them: monuments, religious rites, political institutions, and so on. But in these areas we can find no certainty comparable to the certainty given to us straight away by the linguistic evidence. Four lines of Etruscan are enough to show that the people who spoke Etruscan were quite distinct from the ethnic group that spoke Latin.

(Ibid.)

Saussure characterizes Pictet's approach to the reconstruction of early civilizations through linguistic evidence as follows:

Pictet attempts to recover from the evidence provided by the Indo-European languages the basic features of 'Aryan' civilization. He believes it to be possible to determine various features of this civilization: its material equipment (tools, arms, domestic animals), social life (nomadic or agricultural?), family structure, and government. He attempts to locate the cradle of this civilization in Bactria, and studies the flora and the fauna of the land in question. This constitutes the most advanced investigation of its kind, and inaugurated a science called 'linguistic paleontology'.

([1922] 1983: 307)

But Saussure is sceptical about the method, which he also associates with Hermann Hirt, because it relies too heavily on doubtful etymologies:

Only gradually has it become apparent how few are the words whose origins can be considered definitely known. We are now much more cautious than formerly. An example of the temerity of earlier days is the following. Latin *servus* ('slave') and *servare* ('keep, guard') were – perhaps unjustifiably – assumed to be connected, and from this

it was inferred that the slave was originally someone who kept guard over the house. In fact it is not even clear that *servare* originally meant that. But that is not all. Meanings of words change, and the meaning of a word often changes when its users migrate.

([922] 1983: 308)

Arguments from the absence of certain terms are also an uncertain guide to material culture:

The absence of a word has been interpreted as proof that originally a primitive civilization lacked the thing in question. This is a mistake. Asiatic languages have no verb for 'to plough', but this does not prove that ploughing was originally unknown there. It may have been abandoned or replaced by other techniques, called by other terms.

([1922] 1983: 308)

What then is Saussure saying about the role of linguistics in reconstructing history? His denial that we can use language to identify racial units is unremarkable. It seems that for Saussure ethnicity is a developed collective self-consciousness which is expressed not only through religion and culture, but through a common language. These ethnic identities can be reconstructed; we can tell that the Etruscans were a different ethnic group from the Latins. And we can look for evidence from religion, politics, monuments etc., but the only certainty we can have is that given by linguistic evidence. From this it is evident that linguistic bonds both reflect and create ethnic identity, and that linguistics is therefore a key discipline in the tracking of ethnicity through history. Ethnicity emerges historically as a dialectic between initial racial categories (cf. Saussure's discussion of the Germanic type), the migrations, historical and social changes, conquests, linguistic changes, changes in material culture, etc. that create the disjunction between language and race, and the synthesis of non-linguistic and linguistic identity that emerges: ethnicity. It is worth pointing out that in speaking of a Germanic racial type, one is still using a basically linguistic label as a classificatory term. Why should this type not be called 'Blondes' or 'Long-skullers'?¹³

The concept of ethnicity has a dual function. It is a more reflexive category than race; the labels we give to ethnic groups are much closer to, or may even coincide with, the labels they give themselves. In this sense, it is progressive when set against the use of purely external or 'objective', 'scientific' categories to label human groups. But it also provides a classificatory term for a human collective against which linguistic categories can be measured. We say that a particular group are ethnically *X* but they speak language *Y*. In this sense it fills the gap left by race, for unless we believe that human identity is only constructed in linguistic communities we must have a means of talking about the ways in which human beings are categorized independently of linguistic labels

like ‘German’, ‘French’, ‘Chinese’. So we say: ‘She is ethnically Chinese, but was brought up in Holland and speaks Dutch as her first language’.¹⁴

Rather than look at the question of race within its own history and the political importance of linguistic labelling and categorization, linguistics has preferred to take comfort in its identity as a discipline which rejects explanations based on race. Hall defines the National Socialist heresy in familiar terms:

Some scholars, especially in Germany, under the influence of non-scientific pressures like that of nationalistic ideology, have gone off the deep end in drawing unjustifiable deductions about the physical race (supposedly ‘Nordic’) and the dwelling place (often ascribed to Northern Europe or even specifically Germany) of the speakers of this unrecorded ancestral language which we reconstruct from the evidence of related languages attested later. Even the very name we give to the ancestral language has been misused for non-scientific purposes: of the various names that have been proposed for it, *Aryan* (taken from the Sanskrit term for ‘noble’) was converted by German philologists into a pseudo-racial term to mean first ‘Nordic’ and then (especially in Nazi usage) ‘non-Jewish’; and the term most commonly used even in scientific German usage, *Indo-Germanic*, is perhaps likely to be misinterpreted as giving undue emphasis to the Germanic element. The term normally used outside of Germany is somewhat more general, being based on the two main areas where we find speech descended from this ancestor language: *Indo-European*.

(1950: 176–7)

Like almost all general accounts of National Socialist linguistics, there are no linguists named. There is also the implicit assumption that linguistics develops in a political vacuum, and that the political pressures of National Socialist Germany caused a deviation from the assumptions of scientific linguistics. There is the erroneous statement that Aryan was abused as a pseudo-racial term by linguists in Nazi Germany. In fact, it was linguistics that had set this whole train of thought in motion, not in Nazi Germany, but in the very founding of the science of language in the early nineteenth century. There is an implication that linguistic categories are scientific, neutral, whereas racial ones are intrinsically chauvinist.

This same tendency to sanitize the politics of language is exemplified in a recent essay by Florian Coulmas (1995). Coulmas writes that, in contrast to Italian irredentism, ‘Nazi ideology assigned language a decidedly secondary role’. Thus Coulmas distinguishes linguistic nationalism from a race-based fascism: ‘Language, after all, can be acquired; race, as understood by the Nazis,

cannot' (1995: 62). Further, 'linguistic nationalism would have saved millions had it been the ideology of the Third Reich, for most of those who perished in the gas chambers spoke German'. This neglects the key fact that one cannot choose to acquire a mother-tongue.¹⁵ It was the tensions implicit in this notion of language that fuelled the murderous paranoia of Nazism. Coulmas also makes no reference to any scholar, or intellectual of the Nazi period, and cites no evidence beyond a quotation from Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. What Coulmas is appealing to is a comforting myth about the history of linguistics and of linguistic nationalism. However, in a more recent work Coulmas strongly criticizes the ideologies and assumptions surrounding the notion of mother-tongue, including Weisgerber's use of the concept (Coulmas 1997).

Mallory puts the matter as follows:

The myth of Aryan supremacy, somewhat more evident in some pre-war anthropological journals than among the linguistic ones, was, in varying degrees, a widespread phenomenon until the consequences of its political expression made it anathema in the academic world. One hardly need emphasize that the implementation of Aryan supremacy by the Nazis was wholly inconsistent with Aryan as a linguistic term; Yiddish is as much an Indo-European language as any other German dialect, while Romany-speaking Gypsies had a far better claim to the title of Aryans than any North European. Thus the myth of Aryan supremacy was neither a direct nor necessary consequence of the philological discoveries of the nineteenth century, but rather the misappropriation of a linguistic concept and its subsequent grafting onto an already existing framework of prejudices, speculations and political aspirations. The Indo-Europeans leave more than the legacy of Aryan supremacy.

(1989: 269–70)

This seems firstly to argue that the understanding within linguistics of the term 'Aryan' was inherently value-free, and that only its application to race created undesirable consequences. On this view, the trouble began when the linguistic category 'Aryan' was misapplied to racial categories. Since Jews spoke an Indo-European language, Yiddish, they should have been classified as Indo-Europeans. (In fact, Yiddish has not been unambiguously classified as an Indo-European language – since it has Semitic elements – and in any case it was easy to present Yiddish as the result of the corrupting impact of the Jews on a European language.)

This implies that it is legitimate to classify people by language, but not to classify them by race, and that all the dire political consequences flowed from misuse of the ideas of linguistics by others outside linguistics (e.g. in physical anthropology). H.F.K. Günther, the most prominent

race theorist of the 1920s and 1930s and a trained Indo-Europeanist, expressed his view of the problem as follows:

There are Germanic, Romance and Slavic languages, but no Germanic, Romance or Slavic races. Language and race are interrelated in ways difficult to discern, but language boundaries are never race boundaries, and race boundaries are never language boundaries.

(1933: 6)

In a footnote Günther added: ‘I have learned that in giving instruction about race questions one cannot emphasize and repeat this statement often enough’.

This recognition that racial and linguistic categories were non-isomorphic did not preclude the use of linguistics in the reconstruction of history, migration etc. (Günther 1933: 477–95). Günther’s position, therefore, follows the consensus within twentieth century linguistics that scientific linguistics recognizes the distinction between categories of language and race, and that nonetheless linguistics is one of the keys to reconstructing pre- and early history. In this respect the label ‘pseudo-science’ will not work here to distinguish Nazi scholarship from mainstream European linguistics. In addition however, Günther argued that race had an impact on pronunciation, so that a people who lost their own language and acquired a new one would still ‘betray’ their former racial identity in their speech (1933: 479); Günther also recognized the impact of race nature on linguistic structure, e.g. praising the active, i.e. dynamic, verbs of the Indo-European languages (1933: 480–1) and speaking of a Nordic *Sprachegeist*. Günther’s linguistics therefore also belongs to the broad European tradition of the linguistics of national character, one that was represented within National Socialist linguistics, but also resisted by critics for its unscholarly vagueness and circularity (Rohlf’s 1943). Friedrich Neumann (1939: 112) declared that language, race and *Volk* had grown together and belong together. Where you find German speech, you can find the German *Volk*: ‘But it must really be speech, one that comes from an inheritance [. . .]’.

The scientific imagination and the horizons of community

Both the ‘science’ of language and the ‘science’ of race have played an immense role in the cultural politics of the modern world. For both disciplines in their different but entangled ways have made claims about human diversity, the measurement of human groups, and the membership of lower-level categories in higher-level ones: dialects belong to languages, and languages belong to families. They have both sought scientific precision in postulating new links of identity or membership.

The power of these forms of postulated identifications (e.g. between different speakers of various ‘Slavic’ languages) was seen clearly by Edward Freeman writing in 1877:

The plain fact is that new lines of scientific and historical inquiry which have been opened in modern times have had a distinct and deep effect upon the politics of the age. The fact may be estimated in many ways, but its existence as a fact cannot be denied. Not in a merely scientific or literary point of view, but in one strictly practical, the world is not the same world as it was when men had not yet dreamed of the kindred between Sanscrit, Greek, and English, when it was looked on as something of a paradox to hint that there was a distinction between Celtic and Teutonic tongues and nations. Ethnological and philological¹⁶ researches – I do not forget the distinction between the two, but for the present I must group them together – have opened the way for new national sympathies, new national antipathies, such as would have been unintelligible a hundred years ago. [. . .] What we now call the sentiment of nationality did not go for much; what we now call the sentiment of race went for nothing at all. Only a few men here and there would have understood the feelings which have led to those two great events of our time, the political reunion of the German and Italian nations after their long political dissolution. Not a soul would have understood the feelings which have allowed panslavism to be a great practical agent in the affairs of Europe, and which have made talk about ‘the Latin race’, if not practical, at least possible. Least of all, would it have been possible to give any touch of political importance to what would have then seemed so wild a dream as a primaeval kindred between Magyar and Ottoman.

([1877] 1995: 263–4)

What Freeman saw was that the power of these postulated relations was such as to change the horizons of identification in ways hitherto unimaginable. Though the scholars remind us of the difference between language and race – ‘Professor Max Müller warned us long ago that we must not speak of a Celtic skull’ – the reality of Müller’s own descriptions of the Aryan family suggests a family of blood relations ([1877] 1995: 271). The reality of our understanding is such that:

In fact mankind instinctively takes language as the badge of nationality. We so far take it as the badge, that we instinctively assume communality of language as a nation as the rule, and we set down anything that departs from that rule as an exception. The first

idea suggested by the word Frenchman or German or any other national name, is that he is a man who speaks French or German as his mother-tongue.

([1877] 1995: 280)

Freeman suggests that all nations adopt new members from outside; but that they nonetheless construct national kinship relations with them; thus while nations are not physiologically pure, they are subjectively distinct. They take the Roman view – that adopted members are part of the natural family, blood relations in a full sense ([1877] 1995: 275–8). Thus scientifically there are no pure races and language is not a guide to race; but in the practical world of the politics of the present ‘we may say unhesitatingly that there are such things as races and nations, and that to the groupings of those race and nations language is the best guide’ ([1877] 1995: 278) Freeman is not simply saying that our categories of race and language are subjective; he is making the point that in this process of adoption there is the continuation of race, one that cannot be defined strictly by the criteria of racial science. There is some essence over-and-above the facts of racial mixing that survives and that essence is something foundational and original:

A family, a tribe, or a nation which has largely recruited itself by adopted members cannot be the same as one which has never practised adoption at all, but all whose members come of the original stock. But the influence of the adopting community on its adopted members is far greater than any influence which they exercise upon it. It cannot change their blood; it cannot give them new natural forefathers; but it may do everything short of this; it may make them, in speech, in feeling, in thought, and in habit, genuine members of the community which has artificially made them its own. While there is not in any nation, in any race, any such thing as strict purity of blood, yet there is in each nation, in each race, a dominant element, or rather something more than an element, something which is the true essence of the race or nation, something which sets its standard and determines its character, something which draws to itself and assimilates to itself all other elements.

([1877] 1995: 278)

For all the vicissitudes of history, ‘[t]he Celtic, Teutonic, Slavonic races come before us as groups of mankind marked out by the test of language’ ([1877] 1995: 287). It seems that linguistics the science has brought out in new clarity the historical, national essences which racial adoption has not obscured.

Once again we can see that the category of race is not viewed materially, or purely physically.

It exists here in a dialectic with language, and the power of categories such as ‘Slavonic’ over time is reflected in the fact that this is a race that can speak its name in its own language, and this represents a socio-political reality and an extension of kinship obligations far beyond the local.

Linguistics and mother-tongue

The case for the priority of the mother-tongue is based on a complex set of interlocking arguments and assumptions. Linguistics as a discipline does not take one explicit stand on the whole question and status of the term, but from formal linguistics (with its category of ‘native speaker’) to sociolinguistics, the assumption is that the mother-tongue is the primary language of socialization, that it can be labelled objectively and that in general there is, in the description of languages, a methodological priority accorded the native-speaker’s knowledge of his or her mother-tongue (that this knowledge is the primary object of inquiry) and that ethically the linguistic bonds formed in the early years create a duty of care on societies, that social systems are obliged to do their utmost to preserve the use of this mother-tongue in as many societal domains and functions as is possible.

While not all sociolinguists will agree that mother-tongue is the basis of ethnicity (they will cite cases where religion seems to be the main criterial difference between groups), in their practice (i.e. when they are not focusing on the problematics of terms like ‘race’, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘language’) they make the assumption that the mother-tongue is the foundation of identity. This assumption certainly underlies attempts to construct ethnohistory, be it the Indo-European hypothesis or the attempts to reconstruct the homeland and migration patterns of people in South-East Asia.

Linguists would argue that the language of socialization is the natural language, and that the person who is socialized in a particular language is a native speaker of that language. In most socio-political contexts (though not all), that makes the individual a member of one ethnic group rather than another. French-speaking Quebecois are ‘French’, English-speaking Canadians are ‘Anglos’. If the children of French speakers become ‘anglo-phone’, then they are lost to Frenchness, they are assimilated. If a French-speaking Canadian produces anglophone children then something has been lost, a link between the true ethnicity and language. The world is out of sorts, and the categories that in the past were isomorphic (French Canadians speak French) are now distinct (French Canadians are assimilating into English).

Thus Hans Naumann, discussing definitions of ‘peoplehood’ in his work *The German nation in danger*, noted that language had been among the entities proposed as a unifying factor. But it would not do, since language was not tied to *Geist*, and ‘there are people of foreign mentality

(*fremdgeistig*), who speak our language just as well as we do' (Naumann 1932: 2). There had, however, been a time when race, state organization, language, law, custom and morality, and world view were in harmony (1932: 7).

The concept of losing one's mother-tongue points to an irony at the heart of the whole concept, if that concept is deemed to be intrinsically distinct from theories of race. If in the inter-war period a German Jew grew up speaking German, then German is his or her mother-tongue. But what if the parents came from Poland? The literal mother-tongue is Yiddish. Has the German Jew assimilated? Talk of linguistic assimilation assumes either a prior prelinguistic self which *should* adopt the language that expresses that self, or that language and ethnicity are one and the same. In other words, the ideal mother-tongue is opposed to the real. The logic of the mother-tongue idea is that a particular individual should be the speaker of a particular language.

The arguments for the ethical priority of the mother-tongue are many and have great political force. The mother-tongue is the natural language of socialization, it provides intergenerational continuity, and the preservation of cultural memories and treasures. If education is in the mother-tongue, this maximizes access to education and ensures the integration of the private and public personality; it bridges the intimacy of the world of the mother with the 'male' world of school, law and administration. This enhances self-worth, a sense of pride in one's origins and a self-confidence in dealing with maturation and adulthood. While it is widely recognized that the right to mother-tongue education and the domains in which a particular language can operate in a given society depend on pragmatic criteria, it is nonetheless evident that the working ideal model is one of ethnolinguistic integration of the language of home with the language of the public world. As Fishman points out, this model of language has a strong grip within sociolinguistics Fishman (1989: 3), one with which he is in sympathy, though he does concede that 'there is no arbitrary lower limit to the number of submerged minorities seeking some form of recognition and protection'. Fishman the sociologist recognizes that claims for ethnic recognition stretch down to infinity, that the Pandora's box of repressed identity can never be emptied. However, emotionally, Fishman's loyalty is to the 'little' languages spoken by 'little peoples' (1989: 571), suggesting that this non-rational or emotional notion of language can be put on a firmer (i.e. scientific) footing (1989: 574).

Notions such as 'mother-tongue' and 'native speaker' are fundamental in contemporary formal as well as sociological linguistics, yet their status within organicist ideology and radical-nationalist identity politics is forgotten or ignored. At the very least it should be recognized that the rise of mother-tongues reflects a particular set of historical circumstances, not a transhistorical law of human identity formation.

The Herder-Humboldt vision of language was an integral part of linguistics under National Socialism. Kloss (1969: 342-3, see Chapter 6) distinguished between three views within the

National Socialist period. The first saw language groups as autonomous, as having the right to survive even as minority cultures within larger states. This view was not presented as an ethical principle, but in the spirit of rejecting assimilation and the crossing of boundaries; the second involved the attempts by states to level their populations linguistically (Kloss points the finger at Italy, though he does admit that the German state suppressed the Sorbian language within its borders); the third view regarded racial type as the ultimate standard, and would value a Nordic non-German more than a German-speaking non-Nordic. Essentially Kloss laments that the first view lost out to the third, but the implication is – and he was in a position to know – that all three views were found in the Nazi movement.

Kloss' vision is of organic linguistic entities protected in their folkish identities by a German European or world order; he opposes that vision to a purely racially based hierarchy where German would merely serve as a lingua franca between those German, Danish, British, French, etc. nationals who qualified by virtue of their physical type. No doubt there is a theoretical conflict here, but it is a conflict *within* Nazism, and involved questions of definition that were not necessarily perceived clearly, or in the same way, by the protagonists at the time. Note that the first view – as defined by Kloss – stresses that assimilation is viewed as a moral crime.

The objection will (and should) be made that to equate the strivings of oppressed peoples for recognition of their mother-tongue with the genocidal crimes of National Socialism is a gross calumny. However it should be borne in mind that part of the radicalization of German intellectual life came with the threat to colonial German language and culture posed by the new states of Eastern and Central Europe created in 1917–1918: Poland, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, the Soviet Union. The German nation was felt to be 'in danger' (Naumann 1932). German was both a far-flung minority language and the 'majority' language of Germany, itself a state partially under foreign occupation, and with a deep sense of national humiliation. The study of language islands in the east (*Sprachinselforschung*) was research into beleaguered cultural islands of Germanness, into the threatened German East under which even Yiddish speakers might be – for transient socio-political reasons – ambivalently classified. German linguists were struggling with a sense of cultural insecurity and a perception that they were being submerged by more powerful cultural forces, the universalizing 'West' on one side, the Slavic hordes on the other and, most insidious of all, the Jews within. These Jews, who were 'more German than the Germans', threatened the link between mother-tongue and race, for they came as an Enlightenment fifth column heralding the dissolution of language and thought (since each nation could no longer be seen as having its own thought expressed in its own unique language), the end of the Herder–Humboldt dream of a world of autonomous authentic national essences living side by side but preserving their distinctiveness.

Schmidt-Rohr and cult of mother-tongue

No consideration of the question of mother-tongue ideology in Germany would be complete without at least some discussion of the case of Georg Schmidt-Rohr.¹⁷ Schmidt-Rohr's intellectual formation and erratic journey through the academic politics of the Third Reich has been researched in detail by Gerd Simon. While Schmidt-Rohr's work shares many features in common with the mother-tongue linguistics of Weisgerber and Trier, his thought had its own line of development and roots not only in German philosophy and linguistics, but also in the *Wandervogel* (youth hiking movement) ideology of healthy exercise and discipline, the channelling of adolescent sexual energy and emotions into organized structures (Simon 1986a). This aspect of Schmidt-Rohr's background is reflected in his concern about the relationship of *Trieb* ('drive, sexual instinct, desire') to *Ordnung* ('order'). This fear of disorder, formlessness and sexuality (especially homosexuality) is found in a concern to distinguish the activity of hiking from the chaotic wanderings of the Gypsy (Simon 1986a: 156). Schmidt-Rohr's mentor and the editor of the *Wandervogel* periodical, Fritz Fulda, was a convinced anti-Semite; however after a controversy over a particularly inflammatory issue of the periodical, Schmidt-Rohr distanced himself from anti-Semitism.

Schmidt-Rohr's early work posed the question of the relationship between language and race in a direct way. In a pamphlet directed at serving soldiers published in 1917, Schmidt-Rohr had written of the mother-tongue as a tool of German thought and a weapon in the struggle for the greater German homeland. While both race and language determine *Geist*, it is language that is the most important. A German-speaker of French blood would be closer in mentality to a German-speaker of German blood than a French-speaker of German blood (1917: 22).

Schmidt-Rohr, like many of his scholarly contemporaries, dreamed of an activist role for his ideas, and saw the language as being in a state of crisis. In 1933 Schmidt-Rohr had diagnosed the German language as 'sick', and prescribed his own theories as educational therapy. What was required was a reconciliation between the thing (*res*) and the word (*verba*) through the organization of the world into linguistic categories. Pedagogy involved not only precision of grammar and reference to the world, but a conceptual-moral order (*Wertrichtigkeit*) (1933b). When the Nazi seizure of power took place, Schmidt-Rohr – like many of his contemporaries in linguistics – saw it as the chance to gain a voice in the management of language affairs, the beginnings of a new *Volkspolitik* based on language.

Schmidt-Rohr's *Die Sprache als Bildnerin der Völker* (1932) attracted a mixed reception, but had considerable impact in a range of fields and represented in the terms of its time a substantial achievement (Simon 1986a: 528). Richard von Schauckel (1933) asserted that race, not language,

was the key determinant of *Volk*. Friedrich Neumann argued that it was not enough to equate linguistic community with folk community; it was necessary to uncover the inner links between language, *Volk* and race. In a footnote, Neumann pointed to the second edition with its change of title, prompted, he suggested, in order to make the point that language is not sufficient to create *Volkstum* (1939: 105–6, 105n). However the second edition (*Mutter Sprache* (1993)) did not in general tone down the attacks on race theory, and even criticized the persecution of the Jews as an unhelpful way of channelling the anger of the masses (see the discussion in Simon 1986a: 530). Schmidt-Rohr not only argued for the priority of language in the formation of *Volk*, but strongly against the claims of race theorists, whose claims he subjected to ridicule. In this he criticized racial characterology in linguistics, and the kind of *post hoc* argumentation that it employed. Schmidt-Rohr also denied that there was any natural link between race and language, making the point with the familiar example of a Japanese or Negro child raised in a German-speaking environment. Even the most skilled phonetician would be unable to tell their speech apart from that of the native German (1932: 231, 1933a: 227; see Simon 1986a: 530). Thus it is no surprise that Edgar Glässer, the chief representative of racial stylistics, should react with such venom to Schmidt-Rohr's work, replying to his criticisms of 'Nordic effusions' with counter-charge of 'Jewish effusions' (see Glässer 1939c: 35, 51–6). In assessing Glässer's criticisms, we should also note that he had critical, and often harsh, words for the likes of Karl Vossler, Ernst Cassirer, Fritz Mauthner, Werner Betz, the Prague Linguistic Circle, Leo Spitzer, Leo Weisgerber, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Karl Bühler, and Jost Trier (see Römer 1985: 143 for a list of Glässer's epithets).

There were many critical voices raised against Schmidt-Rohr, though not all totally outside the normal range of scholarly debate. Franz Thierfelder, on the other hand, gave an enthusiastic welcome to the work. In his remarks on Schmidt-Rohr we can find one of the keys to the confusion that surrounds this topic.

Thierfelder greeted Schmidt-Rohr's book as a valuable strike against race theory, and praised Schmidt-Rohr's vision as an attack on the *Rassenwahn* ('race frenzy') of late nineteenth century materialism. In this, he asserted, Schmidt-Rohr was arguing in defence of the *völkisch* ideal and Germany's place in Europe. Members of the local groups of the Deutsche Akademie were offered the books at a 25 per cent discount (Thierfelder 1932: 258). Thierfelder was one of Schmidt-Rohr's supporters in the political fall-out from his book, a complicated series of events which included a proceeding to exclude Schmidt-Rohr from the NSDAP (he had joined at the end of April or the beginning of May 1933, Simon 1986a: 534). This process eventually ended in 1939 with Schmidt-Rohr's rehabilitation by the Party's Rassenpolitisches Amt (Bureau of Race Policy).¹⁸

Another enthusiastic review came from Heinz Kloss (1934). Kloss, while disputing that German Jews could be seen as belonging to the German people, had strong praise for Schmidt-

Rohr as a passionate advocate of the identity-creating power of the mother-tongue. In this review Kloss set out the theoretical position that Schmidt-Rohr himself – already wavering in 1933 – was later to adopt: that race determines who is a *potential* member of the *Volk*, but that language determines who actually *is* a *Volksgenosse* (1934: 130). Kloss pointed out that just as Schmidt-Rohr rejected materialism in linguistics, so he also rejected race theory as materialistic. While Schmidt-Rohr juxtaposed race with the trinity of language, *Geist* and *Seele*, for Kloss the correct opposition was one between language and *Geist* on the one hand, and race and *Seele* on the other (Kloss 1934: 130).¹⁹

Here, at the time of the Nazi take-over, we can see that there are two discourses of race in a half-glimpsed conflict: the biological–materialistic and the vitalistic–*völkisch*. Linguists of Weisgerber and Schmidt-Rohr’s generation rejected Neogrammarian materialism; thus they were theoretically at odds with physical or materialistic theories of race. Their notion of *Volk* (and *Blut*) was vitalistic, and did not clearly distinguish between the characterology of body, race, *Geist* and language. But they were by profession inclined to stress the linguistic, and a theory that accorded no place for language in the formation and maintenance of *Volk* had little to offer them. Debrunner (1932: 307) commented that ‘many linguists would be delighted to see this thorough-going rejection of the idea of a physical, linguistic and cognitive power of the race to shape the development of the *Volk*’.

Schmidt-Rohr’s attitude to German Jewry was complex. On the one hand, he was willing to grant them membership of the German people, since German was their mother-tongue. On the other hand, this granting of membership carried with it the demand that they fulfil their duties as members of the *Volk*. These duties Schmidt-Rohr conceived of in the conventional terms of the conservative–nationalist right. Thus membership of the German people represented also a kind of accountability to the moral standards represented by German values. Schmidt-Rohr articulated a vision of the German language as an assimilating force that could co-opt outsiders, as a power that create the unity of the *Volk* out of its disparate parts.

One way to understand Schmidt-Rohr’s attitude to German Jews is in his vision of the *Wandervogel* as a miniature version of the German *Volk* (Simon 1986a). Thus if every member of the unit plays their part, and if they behave in a disciplined fashion in matters of decorum, sexuality, language, then they can be accepted as a full member of the group. If they stand out or threaten the group’s unity, then they are a threat. Jews would be acceptable if they were invisible as a distinct sub-group. This position was perfectly compatible with anti-Semitism, and with the hostility to liberalism and universalism that so often accompanied it. But it also logically made specific attacks on the Jews counter-productive, for singling them out for criticism and persecution would only strengthen their sense of themselves as a people apart and therefore damage the unity

of the German people as an orderly community of like-minded people joined in a common language.

What emerges from this confused and confusing episode is that the vitalistic theory of mother-tongue was not at odds with National Socialism. The attack in the style of Schmidt-Rohr on a generalized 'race theory' was ill-advised, but the real requirement for pursuing the mother-tongue ideology was purely negative: the absence of any assertion that language had absolute priority over race in the formation of the *Volk*, and the absence of any assertion that Jews were members of the German people. Even better of course was a positive statement that they were excluded (see the quotations from Banniza von Bazan and Kloss in Römer 1985: 177).

Thus even after Schmidt-Rohr 'turned', he continued to pursue the cult of the mother-tongue. Given that racial categories do not define each particular *Volk*, the mother-tongue was still logically the decisive force in determining *Volk*, since someone of Nordic race could just as easily become an Italian or a Pole as a German. Within the boundary of the six races that made up the German people and those related to it, language still operated in a decisive way. Thus the mother-tongue was the most important factor in the maintenance of the *Volk*. The noble forebears of the present-day German had disappeared because of their linguistic, not racial, fall (1934b: 227). Schmidt-Rohr also set out a detailed model of the main stages of alienation from the core German *Volk* (1934c).

In 1939 Schmidt-Rohr published two studies on levels of the maintenance of the *Volk*. The first opened with the following declaration: 'The first and most essential level in the maintenance of the life of each people is blood' (1939a: 81). These essays addressed the question of the continuity and health of the German people, and the dangers of a low birth-rate, racial impurity and eugenic flaws, and assimilation. Germans overseas were exposed to the threat of assimilation, and of becoming part of foreign races by acquiring another language as mother-tongue (1939a: 82). These losses strike directly at the health of the body of the *Volk*, and this assimilation, which is caused by economic and political pressure, is the cause of great pain and suffering. These losses are also gains for other peoples, in that they are strengthened by the addition of German racial strength. However, a low birth-rate can be put right by an increased will to survive, but these acts of assimilation are diminishing the geographical boundary of the German *Volk*. The key to this assimilation (*Umvolkung*) is the language, the loss of the German mother-tongue. This is not to say that language alone is criterial for membership of a *Volk* (1939a: 87). However in Central Europe the peoples are not racially distinct from us, so in those areas language is the most important way of distinguishing one *Volk* from another. On the basis of the inherited racial characteristics a language forms a world view; this power to shape race is as strong among the Germans in the Reich as it is among overseas Germans. The defence of the *Volk* requires awareness

of the crisis and the will to action (1939a: 88). In this language must be treasured as a sacred possession of the *Volk* (*Volksheiligtum*); she must be seen as a queen (*Volkskönigin*) to which the *Volk* is bound by ties of emotion and inheritance. Thus the inheritance from the (male) ancestors (*Vätererbe*) is a female deity, whose power and strength reaches out to the beleaguered German people, and in whose devoted worship the *Volk* can find its salvation.

In the second essay, Schmidt-Rohr again made this rhetorical shift from *Rasse* to *Sprache*. He began with the assertion that '[c]ompared with race, language is the most profound, the most fundamental force' (1939b: 161). While language can serve 'mute' race by bringing into it the realm of historical action, language reflects race and cannot influence it: race is active, language is passive or an intermediary between race and action. When an individual is shaped by a language, he is being indirectly shaped by race. In this sense language is the voice of race: 'race without language must remain mute within the realm of the conceptual' (1939b: 162). Schmidt-Rohr portrays racial identity as destiny, and as determining the fitness of the individual. German race science sees the German people as made up of six races; thus there is no direct equation between race and *Volk*. Racial type does not guarantee membership of a particular *Volk*, but only of a group of *Völker*. A person of Nordic race can grow up a member of a variety of nations, can become either German or English or Greek or Italian. The decisive force here is the linguistic acquisition of membership (1939b: 163). Only members of the six races can become members of the German *Volk*; the power of language to create *Volk* is limited therefore to the race or blood ties that unite the speakers. The race destiny of the individual is determined by birth. The same is true of their linguistic destiny, as long as that individual is formed unproblematically by the mother-tongue and they are racially compatible with it. This process is however not always secured by birth, and the vicissitudes of personal history enter into this, including the possibility of bilingualism.

Schmidt-Rohr discusses the various criteria used in allocating people to a particular race. He notes that it is not geography, nor is it citizenship. The French would regard a Negro or Jew as French if they were citizens, but would not consider the French-speakers in Canada as members of the French people. In the case of the Germans it is quite clear: the individual must be racially German, and their consciousness, mentality and way of thinking must be formed by the mother-tongue. Both are essential prerequisites, though in some marginal cases the expression of a will to belong can also be taken into consideration. Thus though race is fundamental (it is the first level of the preservation of the *Volk*), in fact language (the second level) is still the formative power. A person of Nordic race may become Italian or Polish or English; only the mother-tongue can make them a German (1939b: 167). Thus in facing the dangers of urbanization, eugenic decline and falling birth-rate we should not only focus in a one-sided way on race, but also to bring language into the picture, since both race and language complement each other. Language is 'the highest

form of the revelation of race' in the world of thought and action (*Geistwelt*, 1939b: 168). We must pursue the preservation of the *Volk* through the maintenance of the language, teaching reverence of the mother-tongue.

The mother-tongue is enthroned by Schmidt-Rohr as a female deity, from which radiate life-giving and life-sustaining forces. The mother-tongue is not only revelation, it is also the mystic site of *Volk* in the way that race cannot be, it is 'the arcanum of our Germanness' (1939b: 168).

In 1943 Schmidt-Rohr was made head of a secret 'Political Language Bureau' established under the umbrella of the SS as a section of the Ahnenerbe (by then called Wissenschaftsamt A der SS) with the cover-title *Angewandte Sprachsoziologie* ('Applied sociology of Language'). The task of this bureau as set out by Schmidt-Rohr involved a mixture of language purism, rhetorical analysis and propaganda, including the struggle against various forms of 'linguistic treason' as high treason against the *Volk*. Schmidt-Rohr's centralizing ideology is evident from his hostile remarks about dialects being made into languages, his criticism of attempts to adopt Swiss German as a language and in his advocacy of identity co-ordination for the Dutch (Simon 1985b: 125). At the time of his volunteering for the *Volkssturm*, Schmidt-Rohr had been considering expanding the personnel of his bureau. The man he had in mind was Heinz Kloss (Simon 1985a: 382).²⁰

Conclusion

Sir William Jones' postulation of a link between the European languages and Sanskrit (1786) has been seen as the founding moment in modern linguistics (Robins 1990: 149–50). Whatever the actual role of Jones' lecture, it symbolizes the breakthrough achieved by linguistics at the beginning of the nineteenth century, an achievement given more solid foundations by the methodological rigour of Bopp. This was an achievement hailed with pride by Hermann Güntert in 1938, when he asked rhetorically which discipline should be given the credit for the discovery and scientific validation of the concepts 'Indo-Germanic' and 'Aryan' (1938: 7). Richard Harder, writing in the *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* in 1942, paid tribute to Bopp as the founder of a new science, one which – even granted the well-known distinction between *Volkstum* and language – could contribute to reconstructing the history of races (1942: 755).

That founding moment triggered a massive crisis of identity, and of identification. The birth of linguistics, and the discourse of science in which it clothed itself in the nineteenth century, raised fundamental questions about the relationship of Europeans to the rest of humanity. The fact that Sanskrit was an important member of the Indo-European family – perhaps even the most important – raised a serious challenge to notions of European supremacy. It dramatized the

issues at the heart of the academic study of human diversity: are all human beings descended from the same source? How can we explain human racial and linguistic difference? That crisis came eventually to be conceptualized in terms of the problematics of language and race.

One way to see the dilemma posed by this ‘discovery’ of the Indo-European family is as follows. The intellectual history of the nineteenth century can be seen in terms of a competition between different disciplines for mastery of historical explanation, as science moved into a gap left by the decline of the Bible as an authority in scholarly affairs. Hegelianism and Marxism proposed a teleological framework; evolutionary theory a teleologically blind, but all-embracing, process of selection. Herder’s discussion of the origin of language (1772) had confronted the problem that human beings are generalists, that their language is not natural to them in the way that it is to animals. Even though mankind is part of nature, human beings do not ‘naturally’ speak in any particular way (1772: 37). Human beings are social creatures in a way that animals are not, since animals are simply following an inner drive, whereas human beings construct communities through their reflexive power to name and to empathize. Human beings can and have worked their way up out of nature, but the question of where they are going hangs unanswered over the essay. If we look then at Grimm’s lecture on the same topic, delivered in 1851, we can find a similar assertion that language is not directly given by God. It exists outside nature. Human languages change, whereas animal cries have not varied since the creation: animals cannot rise up in creation (1852: 110). But Grimm’s target is not the Biblical story; it is the disciplinary claims of natural science. For if language is simply part of natural creation, then it falls to the natural scientist to explain it. But it is not simply part of nature, as the parallel between animals and humans shows.

If language does not belong to nature, is it not then part of human culture and history, and does it not then fall to history or philosophy to explain it? Each essay has a key passage in which one can find the essential clue as to how linguistics developed as an autonomous science: the notion of ‘mother-tongue’. For while human language is not given directly by nature, it is granted by the natural bond of child and parent in the intimacy and warmth of the home. Both Herder and Grimm evoke this primal bonding in evocative terms. Herder talks of the inheritance of ideas, images and feelings the child gains from its parents, both father and mother (‘father or mother tongue’, 1772: 176–7). In Grimm the focus has shifted towards the mother. Grimm waxes lyrical about the child absorbing the soft voice of its mother before it is able actively to speak (1852: 122). The essence of identity is laid down before the child can speak, but that essence is nonetheless formed by, and inseparable, from language, from ‘mother-tongue’. Effectively, what emerges from these essays is that language is *sui generis*; human language is not a natural cry, but its transmission is nonetheless ‘natural’, or more precisely, ‘quasi-natural’. It is drunk in with the mother’s milk. The human institution of language is founded on the bond between mother and child.

In this way language does not fall under the natural sciences, nor it is the province of the biologist. It is thus not consciously created like systems of laws or literature or political ideologies. As a quasi-natural human endowment, its essence is in the bond between mother and child, in the primal community. Its fundamental place in human socialization makes it a key to human history, conceived of as the history and migration of peoples.

If this view of language is accepted and projected back onto the past as a panchronic ‘quasi-natural’ law, linguistics can claim to offer insights unavailable to historians, who rely on the partial record of written documents or inscriptions, and archaeologists, who rely on mute objects.

Benveniste claimed a clear priority for linguistics over all other disciplines:

It is a very remarkable fact indeed that we are able to single out the peoples which partook in the original community and to designate them with certainty as Indo-Europeans to the exclusion of all others, because the stages of their migrations and their settlements remain unknown. The reason for this is language and language alone. The notion ‘Indo-European’ is primarily a linguistic one, and if we are in a position to extend it so as to include other aspects of their civilization, this again is due solely to language. The concept of genetic relationship has in no other linguistic domain so precise a sense and such clear justification.

(1973: 9)

Linguistics is thus the key to history, but history imagined as a history of peoples with mother-tongues. Language is a repository of fundamental values, and is transmitted in the immediacy of the family unit as the primary act of socialization. The imagining or evoking of a ‘vernacular’ identity and the postulation of that mother-child bond as fundamental offers therefore a key to human history, conceived of as a history of social units with their own individual sets of emotional associations, world views and beliefs.

This notion of mother-tongue socialization as a universal law has had its critics within linguistics, for example Karl Vossler (Ahlzweig 1994: 179). Oswald Spengler, *qua* world historian, also took exception to this projection of the mother-tongue ideal back into the past. In this he was participating in the rivalry between the various disciplinary claimants to explain human history:

Piety towards the mother tongue – the very term testifies to deep ethical forces, and accounts for the bitterness of our ever-recurring language battles – is a trait of the *Late* Western soul, almost unknowable for the men of other Cultures and entirely so for the primitive. This piety is tacitly presupposed by our historians in every context, which

leads to a multitude of fallacious conclusions as to the bearing of linguistic discoveries upon the fortunes of ‘peoples’ – think of the reconstruction of the ‘Dorian migration’ argued from the distribution of later Greek dialects. It is impossible, therefore, to draw conclusions as to the fortunes of the race side of peoples from mere place-names, personal names, inscriptions, and dialects. Never do we know *a priori* whether a folkname stands for a language-body, or a race-part, or both, or neither – besides which, folk-names themselves, and even land-names, have as such, destinies of their own.

(Spengler [1922] 1993: 697–8).²¹

Within linguistics, a further ‘quasi-natural’ dimension comes in the relation of people to territory; dialectology maps the variation of language in contact with the landscape, which is viewed as the natural linguistic order of things. Thus Saussure can assert that Brussels is a Germanic city according to the ‘natural state of affairs’ ([1922] 1983: 269). But – one might object – if it were truly natural, it would also be true.

What is significant about this notion of mother-tongue is that it is founded on the distinction between the baby bird and the human infant. A child taken at birth from its parents will speak the language of its adopted parents, not those of its ‘natural’ parents. The immensely powerful but only ‘quasi-natural’ nature of the first human bonding sets it apart from nature; the child, unlike the bird, must be socialized into its own true nature by a community. The period of socialization is the period of maximum vulnerability. The horizon of the child’s world is the horizon of its mother-tongue: ‘Mother-tongue’ is the language of the mother, the mother teaches the children her language. But if among Germans abroad the mother does not speak German, the children grow up from the first day with a foreign language, and ‘the first step in their alienation from their land of origin is taken’ (Schöffner 1923: 93). Gustav Neckel²² regarded change of language as the most significant form of loss of racial identity (Neckel 1929: 128).²³ For Weisgerber, the vitality of language and its power over its speakers is like a shield protecting them from assimilation (1935c: 244).

Grimm is not talking merely about local identities and small, isolated clans. The language that the German babe-in-arms imbibes is part of a language family, one that transcends the immediate social horizon to embrace an enormous, newly glimpsed collectivity. The intimate, familial mother-tongue is simultaneously the world-language, the Indo-European or Aryan mother-tongue. Linguistics, by uncovering the links between German and the neighbouring Slavic, Lithuanian and Celtic languages, had uncovered:

if not all, then most of the links of a great, almost incalculably long language chain,

which in its roots and inflections reaches from Asia all the way to us, fills almost all of Europe and even now can be called the mightiest tongue on the face of the earth, over which it is extending itself ever further, and which it will one day cover entirely.

(1852: 106)

The spread of the mother-tongue is thus the triumph of a particular sensibility; the individual is socialized not only into a family or a clan, but into an immense community which linguistics has discovered, and which is thereby being restored unto itself. Linguistics is thus the redeemer of lost unities; and the expansion of the horizons of the individual proceeds not only through space in the present (as the British Empire, and the English language, expands), but back in time as more and more links in the chain are revealed. Here is the nexus between linguistics, colonialism, the mother-tongue ideology and the quasi-natural panchronic bond between language and blood kinship group.

Grimm was in fact prepared to consider that to some small extent language was fully natural, recognizing that the ability to produce certain speech-sounds might be innate. But he did not attach much importance to the phenomenon, suggesting that anatomists will have their work cut out trying to distinguish between a north and south German on the basis of their vocal apparatus (1852: 114). For in this limited respect language is like bird-song, it reflects nothing of socialization and the bonds that bind human beings to each other.

Thus the politically explosive view was not that language and race were naturally related, but that language and human kinship were formed of a primal bond, whose quasi-naturalness was ennobling, since it symbolized the superiority of human beings over the natural machine of nature. The 'language instinct'²⁴ that was part of mankind's natural endowment was to be shaped from almost the moment of birth by the fundamental tribal bond of the family-nation. This notion can be found in Herder's idea of human beings as being endowed with the ability to learn and speak a language, but as not – like animals – having a particular form of speech that is directly inherited. Inheritance is indirect, and therefore the focus of intense anxiety and insecurity.

The price of that ennoblement²⁵ was a set of anxieties about cultural transmission, family bonds and kinship, the sexual fidelity of females to their kin-group, and the relation of the individual to wider communities with which that individual might seem to be 'linguistically' related. Identity becomes dependent on the state-building capacities of the group, for in order to secure its boundary, the mother-tongue had to be protected by political power and force if necessary. In other words, mother-tongue requires the protection offered by a powerful fatherland.

In this nexus as reconstructed here we can find the crisis of identification and assimilation that gave rise to mother-tongue fascism. For, to put the matter crudely, once a language is conceptualized

as a mother-tongue and if people with dark skins are speaking an Indo-European language, then *either* the European must accept those people as co-members of the mother-tongue family, as sharing equally in the most fundamental form of human socialization; *or* the language must be seen to have passed beyond the boundaries of the family, and be spoken by outsiders and strangers. Neither alternative is particularly palatable. The first suggests not merely solidarity with the 'Hindoo', but identity on the most fundamental human level. The second involves the recognition that the boundaries of the language, and therefore of the self, are unclear and unstable. This in turn puts a question-mark against the mother-tongue ideology as a foundation of more local unities, e.g. German unity; for the boundaries of the language are no longer reliable as the foundation of a community unified by world view, beliefs and kinship. If the bonds of language are so weak as to allow outsiders to take it over, then what value can it have as the basis of a state? Furthermore, if a mother-tongue can pass outside the kinship group, what value can it have as a key to history and the reconstruction of earlier human unities. This not only excludes linguistics from playing a role in the reconstruction of human history, but also implies that that history is fundamentally mute and impenetrable, an endless and disordered mixing of peoples, landscapes and languages. The notion of mother-tongue in combination with structuralist organicism implied that if one could not identify the boundary, one could not define a centre or origin either.

The logic that said that all Germans should be united under one state implied a crucial political role for anyone who claimed to know where one language or language family ended and another began. It required the imagining of diversity as a particular kind of ordered diversity, as a kind of harmony in which all the forms of speech found in a particular territory might be thought of as participating in a higher form of organization; it both demanded and encouraged the identification of 'dialects', and of those dialects as participants in a single family: a language. It gave a special role to a science of tracing and accounting for deviations from a common source. It offered reassurance that an inhabitant of Rostock and a Stuttgarter spoke the same language, by offering a level of idealization on which that statement was an established scientific fact, rather than a political ideology. The language and the people created each other in this imaginary space, where politics was transformed into science, and the idealized state of affairs became the natural one. The relation of spoken diversity to written norms could likewise be naturalized under labels such as 'German': Stuttgart German, Rostock German, written German were all different kinds of German.

The establishment of a German state represented the restoration of a lost unity preserved in the absence of political or confessional unity through centuries of 'diaspora' by the language. In 'diaspora', in its exile from itself, it had been the language that had held the German nation together (Weisgerber 1938b: 49). Within this same framework, the British Empire could similarly

be seen as the re-establishment of the Aryan state, and as the reclaiming of lost branches of the Indo-European family. Though British imperialism was not only driven by ‘mother-tongue’ Aryanism, the ‘reunification’ of Germany and the reunification of the Aryans in the British empire were both partially sustained by hypotheses about relationships between linguistic phenomena. The alternative missionary ideal of a reunified humanity under a single benevolent Christian world order was partially founded on the notion that linguistic monogenesis implied the unity of the human race, one that could be restored and reconstructed under benevolent British hegemony. Nazism, like British colonialism, could be seen as a ‘coming home’.

The crisis that came with this mother-tongue view of language and identity was therefore the horror of assimilation. That horror was expressed in Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*. Jews were parasites on host cultures; they ‘speak the most languages’ ([1925/6] 1992: 144), they take over and ruin other cultures ([1925/6] 1992: 275), ‘things can go so far that large parts of the host people will end by seriously believing that the Jew is really a Frenchman or an Englishman, a German or an Italian, though of a special religious faith’ (1992: 277). Jews are a race with a special relationship to language:

On this first and greatest lie, that the Jews are not a race but a religion, more and more lies are based in necessary consequence. Among them is the lie with regard to the language of the Jew. For him it is not a means of expressing his thoughts, but a means of concealing them. When he speaks French, he thinks Jewish, and while he turns out German verses, in his life he only expresses the nature of his nationality. As long as the Jew has not become the master of the other peoples, he must speak their languages whether he likes it or not, but as soon as they become his slaves, they would all have to learn a universal language (Esperanto, for instance!), so that by this additional means the Jews could more easily dominate them!

([1925/6] 1992: 279)

Hitler implies that the Jews are clever enough to successfully pass as ‘real’ Germans. However in an attack on the pretensions of Jews to Germanness he also suggests that they speak the language badly:

With this begins one of the most infamous deceptions that anyone could conceive of. Since of Germanism he possesses really nothing but the art of stammering its language – and in the most frightful way – but apart from this has never mixed with the Germans, his whole Germanism rests on the language alone. Race, however, does not lie in the

language, but exclusively in the blood, which no one knows better than the Jew, who attaches very little importance to the preservation of his language, but all importance to keeping his blood pure.

([1925/6] 1992: 283)

In making the transition to a new language the old ideas remain, one's 'inner nature is not changed':

This is best shown by the Jew who can speak a thousand languages and nevertheless remains a Jew. His traits of character have remained the same, whether two thousand years ago as a grain dealer in Ostia, speaking Roman, or whether as a flour profiteer of today, jabbering German with a Jewish accent. It is always the same Jew.

([1925/6] 1992: 283)

The Jew is therefore simultaneously both too skilled linguistically (i.e. the 'German Jews' able to speak German perfectly) and not skilled enough (i.e. the Eastern Jew stammering in Yiddish or 'Jewish German').

A conquering people can be taken over gradually by the very people it has conquered. The Aryan conqueror had remained supreme as long as he 'ruthlessly upheld the master attitude' ([1925/6] 1992: 269). But:

As soon as the subjected peoples began to raise themselves up and probably approached the conqueror in language, the sharp dividing wall between master and servant fell. The Aryan gave up the purity of his blood, and therefore, lost his sojourn in the paradise which he had made for himself. He became submerged in the racial mixture, and gradually, more and more, lost his cultural capacity, until at last not only mentally but also physically, he began to resemble the subjected aborigines more than his own ancestors.

([1925/6] 1992: 268–9)

Nationality or race lies in the blood, not the language ([1925/6] 1992: 353–4). In fact, language is the point of vulnerability. For it provides a bridge to racial mixing. A higher race mating with a lesser race always brings about a lowering of the former, 'even if the resulting mongrels spoke the language of the earlier, higher race a thousand times over'. Fortunately Joseph II never carried out his Germanization programme ([1925/6] 1992: 354). Great damage is done to the German reputation in America by the Americans mistaking German Jews for Germans: 'Surely no one will call the purely external fact that most of this lice-ridden migration from the East speaks German a proof

of their German origin and nationality?’ ([1925/6] 1992: 355). What can be Germanized is land, however this process of acquiring territory also brought ‘foreign blood’ into the national body and thereby contributed to the ‘catastrophic splintering of our inner being which is expressed in German super-individualism’ (ibid.).

Following on from this, Hitler rejected those notions of the state not based on race. In particular he attacks competing nationalistic notions of Germanization, those who wish to Germanize the Slavs: ‘these circles never even began to realize that Germanization can only be applied to soil and never to people’. By forcing the German language on non-Germans one actually de-Germanizes:

But it is a scarcely conceivable fallacy of thought to believe that a *Negro* or a Chinese, let us say, will turn into a German because he learns German and is willing to speak the German language in the future and perhaps even give his vote to a German political party. That any such Germanization is in reality a de-Germanization never became clear to our bourgeois national world. For if today, by forcing a universal language on them, obvious differences between different peoples are bridged over and finally effaced, this means the beginning of a bastardization, and hence in our case not a Germanization but a destruction of the Germanic element.

([1925/6] 1992: 353)

Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* can be contextualized in nineteenth and twentieth century debates over colonial language policy. National Socialism was after all among many other things a radicalized twentieth century form of European colonialism. Within British and French colonialism there had been debates about language policy and education which reflected different views of what the ultimate aims of colonialism were. One view argued for the use of the colonial language to transform the colonial subjects into model Christians and modern citizens. Another envisaged the creation of a buffer-class of bilingual administrators and go-betweens, leaving the ordinary inhabitants of the colony to go about their linguistic and cultural business. English could be seen as a medium for the spread of Christianity; however missionary activity also encouraged the promotion and standardization of vernacular languages. For some the problem of teaching one’s language to people of different races and cultures was that the language would inevitably be changed by contact (Bréal [1901] 1991: 269); it was sometimes argued – for example by Léopold de Saussure (Joseph 1996b) – that it was in principle impossible for colonial subjects to learn the language of the colonialist properly. Those who apparently had succeeded were in essence excellent mimics, achieving the effect ‘through mechanical use of attention and memory, like

circus animals performing tricks' (Joseph 1996b: 6). This answer would no doubt have appealed to Hitler were he pressed to explain how Jews could apparently speak perfect German.

The link between the 'Indo-European hypothesis' and the writings of Kloss and Weisgerber is the fear that Aryans in one case, and the Germans in the other will be swallowed up by other peoples, that their distinctiveness will be lost, that they will assimilate, merge into the surrounding peoples and be lost in the swirl of history. Like the Aryan conquerors of India, the German colonists of Eastern Europe, who brought civilization to the benighted Slavic masses ('[t]hey brought the village as well as the town to the Slavs of Eastern Europe', Kloss 1941a: 15) were in danger assimilating into that inferior culture. Germans were a people with a mission on the world stage (Kloss 1941c: 8), but that great expanse of settlement was also a source of intense anxiety. When the German linguists of the 1930s looked at the question of Indo-European culture, they were acting out contemporary fears concerning the effects of migration to the United States and the fate of the German diaspora in Europe. For the 'imagined community'²⁶ of language was a collective, and language was not a private possession of the individual to be discarded if politically inconvenient; one's language was no mere 'instrument of communication', it was both a right and a moral duty. Linguistic identity, unlike animal nature, is linked to the human will.

The repressed parallel between the nomadic, shiftless Jews of the Nazi imagining and the wandering Indo-Europeans is reflected in much academic anxiety about which peoples are capable of creating stable, geographically bounded political units (see for example the work of Kloss discussed in Chapter 6). For how could the sacred bond of peasant to soil be reconciled with the conquering, martial Aryan invader, or the opportunistic marauding Viking? For just as the Jews conquered the Holy Land and dispossessed it; so, on one version of history, did the Aryans conquer Germany. In this sense the debate about the original homeland involves the projection onto the Jews of a crisis in self-image: 'The mightiest counterpart to the Aryan is represented by the Jew. In hardly any people in the world is the instinct of self-preservation developed more strongly than in the so-called "chosen" (Hitler [1925/6] 1992: 272). The Germans as chosen, with their world mission, their search for the promised land, their longing for redemption as a people: were they not rather like the Jews? The Jews had lost their state and been driven into exile after the destruction of the second temple; after the First World War the Germans had been scattered throughout the peoples of Europe or were psychological prisoners in their own land under the tyranny of Western universalism.

One way to achieve legitimacy was to postulate a homeland for the Indo-Europeans in Europe, thus breaking the repressed identification with the wandering, homeless, cultureless Jew. But there were other academic, intellectual forces at work, including the need to explain the massive spread of the Indo-European languages. Hitler asserted that soil, unlike people, could be

Germanized: 'What has been profitably Germanized in history is the soil which our ancestors acquired by the sword and settled with German peasants' (1992: 355). Kloss talks of regions being 'fully Germanized' by settler colonies (1941a: 12). On this view, it might not necessarily matter so much where the Aryans came from; for just as the Jews could never create an organic, geographical state, so the Aryans always could. Although the forebears of the Germans were a migratory people (*Wandervolk*), they were not 'homeless nomads' who could never put down roots, but a people whose high birth rate allowed them to expand their area of settlement and incorporate new territory without relinquishing the heartland (Kloss 1941a: 11). In this way the apparent conflict between the ideal of the settled farmer bound to the soil and the Germanic warrior as marauding raider might be reconciled.²⁷

We find here expressed a set of fears concerning sexuality, involving the temptation for males to breed with inferior peoples, or the anxiety that women of the superior group will find the males of those lesser breeds more desirable, virile, etc. (the descent of the Aryan). Schmidt-Rohr, outlining the threat to the German people posed by racial weaknesses, a low birth-rate and assimilation, wrote of the particularly unbearable nature of the occupation of the Rheinland by 'Negroes' (i.e. French troops) after the First World War. Germans overseas were particularly at threat from the temptation to mix with inferior breeds (1939a: 82). Sexuality, like language, occupied a zone of intense anxiety between nature on the one hand and the human will and culture on the other.

The assertion that language and blood kinship are distinct is almost always a statement about the present or the recent past; it is generally assumed that the further back in history one goes, the closer the link. This view is held not only by Nazi linguists, but by opponents of racism such as Ruth Benedict. Those nineteenth century scholars who talked of the original 'great Aryan race' (Williams 1877: 1) were in general quite clear that its original unity had long since been lost, and that language and race were not to be equated: 'It does not follow that the Gonds are Dravidian because their language is so, any more than that the Cornish people are of the English race because they have adopted our language' (Williams 1877: 9n.). The question to ask about any linguistic theory is however: what attitude does it take to the gap between language and ties of blood and kinship?

It was not the confusion of linguistic and racial categories that defined Nazi linguistics; it was the perception that language and race were drifting ever further apart. The crisis arose from the recognition that human language is not a 'natural' expression of identity like bird-song; it requires an act of will to maintain the link between race, ethnicity, heritage, tradition on the one hand, and language. That act of will had to be collective.

The commonplace observation about bird-song can be used to sum up the anxiety of

assimilation that underlies so much of nineteenth and twentieth century linguistics. That anxiety within linguistics has been repressed by the reconstruction within linguistic theory of language as natural: natural languages are mother-tongue systems spoken by native speakers; languages can be 'cognate', and we can attempt to distinguish 'related' languages from 'unrelated' ones. Indo-European linguistics provided an important intellectual framework both for British colonialism and National Socialism, with an intellectual apparatus – 'substratum', 'adstratum', 'invasion', 'proto-language', 'original homeland', 'migration', 'assimilation' – which allowed sufficient flexibility for the ideologically most desirable state of affairs to be postulated or 'reconstructed'. Linguistics was the dream-factory of the colonial scholar-official, one in which the linguistic diversity of the world could be mapped out, labelled and compared. In this way the migrations and wanderings of the peoples could be brought into a single explanatory framework, and the crisis of resemblance and difference resolved or at least controlled by appeal to science and objectivity.

But part of this process was the postulation and creation of new horizons of identity and identification across vast expanses of time and space. When combined with the organicism of the mother-tongue ideology, the vast horizon of identification (German, Germanic, Indo-Germanic, Aryan?) could only create fear and anxiety, for the strength of the centre was dependent on the definition of the border. Nazism was therefore driven – in part at least – by a paranoid and murderous mixture of Aryan colonialism and mother-tongue nationalism.

As in so many areas, the explicit attacks on the Jews for their linguistic promiscuity were the projection of fears about the Germans' own ethnic weakness: were not Germans in the United States assimilating to English? How would they survive in the new states of Eastern Europe? The Weisgerbian rhetoric about the special attitude of Germans to their language must be read alongside this anti-Semitic ideology; after all, if the Germans were especially faithful, if they had the will to maintain their own language, and if those attitudes were found at the origin of the German *Volk*, then what was of necessity implied was that *other* peoples are less faithful to their own language, that they lacked the will to maintain their own mother-tongue. The German Jew who could speak 'perfect' German, who wrote literary German, who spoke a German dialect, was walking proof that the boundary was insecure, that the bounds of language were weak, and that it was possible to pass promiscuously from one language to another: Jews were native speakers of German and were not Germans.²⁸

APPENDIX

Abbreviations and recurrent terms

	Ahnenerbe	<i>See Forschungs- und Lehrgemeinschaft 'Das Ahnenerbe'</i>
	Ahnenforschung	The study of lineage relations, genealogy
	Abteilung	Branch or section of a main office
	Abteilungsleiter	Section leader, department head
AHD	Althochdeutsch	Old High German
	Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft	General linguistics
	Altertumskunde	The study of classical antiquity
	Amt	Office
	Amt Rosenberg	The Rosenberg Bureau, Rosenberg Office
AKBF	Arbeits-Kreis für biozentrische Forschung	Working Group for Biocentric Research
	Archiv	Archive; journal
	Arier, arisch	Aryan (in some contexts used with the meaning of racially acceptable, i.e. non- Jewish; in others, with a range of specialist meanings from the fields of race theory, linguistics etc.)
	Art	Nature, kind, character (this term has racial connotations)
	Arteigen	Characteristic of our kind, like us, true to type, true to racial type
	Artfremd	Alien, of foreign character, racially or culturally other
	Artung	Disposition, quality, nature
AO	Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP	Overseas Organization of the Nazi Party. Founded as the Overseas Department

		Auslandsabteilung) in 1931; became the AO in 1934. In 1935 the organization was designated as the 43rd Gau. The AO served as a bridge between party offices in Germany and those outside Germany, and sought to promote Nazi views among German citizens living abroad.
	Ausdruck	Expression
	Auslanddeutsche, Auslandsdeutsche	Germans outside Germany. This term could be used for all Germans living outside the Reich, or in a narrower meaning to refer to German citizens resident abroad. These expatriate Germans, in particular German citizens, were often contrasted with the <i>Volksdeutsche</i> , who were permanently settled in communities and compact areas, many of which adjoined the Reich.
	Aussenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP	Foreign Policy Office of the Nazi Party, founded in 1933 under Alfred Rosenberg. This office was the weakest of the competing agencies with an interest in foreign affairs, the other two being the Dienststelle Ribbentrop and the Foreign Ministry itself.
AA	Aussenwärtiges Amt	Foreign Ministry
BA	Bundesarchiv	The German Federal Archives
	Beamte(r)	Official, civil servant
BDC		Berlin Document Centre, now the Bundesarchiv-Zehlendorf. The German Federal Archive is in the process of centralizing archives concerned with National Socialism in Berlin. This involves moving substantial quantities of material from the Federal Archives in Koblenz.
	Bekenntnis	Statement of self-dedication to a faith, a belief, a party
BDM	Bund deutscher Mädel	League of German Girls (counterpart to the Hitler Youth)
BdO	Bund deutscher Osten	Union for the German East
	Beauftragter	An official or leader charged with a specific task or role; special commissioner
	Beauftragter des Führers für die Überwachung der gesamten geistigen und weltanschaulichen Schulung und Erziehung der NSDAP	The Führer's commissioner for the supervision of all intellectual and world view schooling and education in the Nazi Party (Alfred Rosenberg)

	Belastet	Politically tainted (terminology from the Denazification process carried out by the Allies after the war)
	Blut	Blood; the ties of blood; race
	Bodenständigkeit	Rootedness in the soil, an organic bond involving territorial and cultural continuity
BRD	Bundesrepublik Deutschland	Federal Republic of Germany
	Cephalic index	The ratio of head's greatest breadth and length
	Cours, Cours de linguistique générale	Course, Course in General Linguistics, a foundational text in modern linguistics, by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1916)
	Daytshmerish	Term used by Yiddish linguists to describe varieties of Yiddish which they perceive as over-influenced by standard German.
	Deutscher Amerikanertum	The collectivity of Germans and German culture in America
	Deutsche Akademie	The German Academy in Munich (full title: Akademie zur wissenschaftlichen Erforschung und Pflege des Deutschtums – Deutsche Akademie)
DAI	Deutsches Ausland-Institut, Deutsches Auslands-Institut	German Foreign Institute, Stuttgart The successor institution in Stuttgart is today called the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (Institute for Foreign Relations)
DAF	Deutsche Arbeitsfront	German Labour Front
DDR	Deutsche Demokratische Republik	German Democratic Republic
DFG	Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft	German Research Council
DGV	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Volkskunde	German Folklore Society
	Deutscher Neuphilologen Verband	The German Modern Languages Association
	Deutscher Sprachverein	The German Language Association, an organization of language purists
DWI	Deutsches Wissenschaftliches Institut	German Cultural Institute
DNVP	Deutschnationale Volkspartei	German National People's Party (farright rival to the Nazi Party in Weimar politics)
	Deutschtum	Germanness, Germans as a collectivity in their cultural essence

Deutschtum im Ausland	Germans outside Germany. A cover-term to include all Germans living outside Germany, i.e. including both German citizens living temporarily or semi- permanently abroad and ethnic Germans whose homeland is outside the Reich and who may not have German citizenship. Another term suggested was <i>Aussendeutschtum</i> .
Diachronic, diachronisch	Usually juxtaposed to synchronic in Saussurean linguistics. The diachronic perspective on a language involves looking at change over time. This term is often used as a loose synonym for ‘historical’, as in ‘historical linguistics’.
Dichtung	Literary art at its highest level; poetic in that sense (sometimes contrasted to mere <i>Poesie</i>)
Dienststelle	Department, office
Dienststelle Ribbentrop	Party office for foreign policy matters led by Joachim v. Ribbentrop which served as a rival to the Foreign Ministry, effectively losing its function once Ribbentrop became foreign minister in 1938
Dozent, Dozentin	University lecturer; university teacher who has not attained professorial rank
Dozentenführung	Leadership of the university staff (Nazi Party)
Eher Verlag	Eher Publishing House, the central publisher of the Nazi Party
Einsatz	Intervention, operational activity, operation
Einsatzstab	Operational staff
Einsatzstab Rosenberg, Einsatzstab RL (Reichsleiter) Rosenberg	Unit within the Rosenberg Bureau concerned with the seizure of libraries and other cultural artefacts in occupied countries
Energieia	The creative dynamism of language
Forschungsgemeinschaften	Research communities, networks of scholars from different universities with a common interest in a particular geographical area
Forschungs- und Lehrgemeinschaft “Das Ahnenerbe”	The Office of Ancestral Inheritance (Himmler’s organisation for academic research). This became Amt A im

	Persönlichen Stab der RFSS in 1942.
Führerprinzip	Principle of executive-led decision making by a leader or Führer. This principle was introduced into the universities, with the university head or Rektor acquiring greater decision-making powers.
Führerrat	Executive committee, council
Gau	Nazi Party administrative district of the German Reich
Gauleiter	The head of a Gau
Gaunersprache	Thieves' cant, underworld jargon
Gestapo Geheime Staatspolizei	Secret State Police, concerned with countering threats to state law and order, founded by Goering in 1933 in Prussia, but coming quickly under Himmler's control. In 1939 the Gestapo was merged with the criminal investigation department of the police (Kriminalpolizei). The umbrella organization for the security services was the SS-Hauptamt Sicherheitspolizei, subsequently the Reichssicherheits-Hauptamt.
Geist	Mind, intellect, wit, spirit, morale (Langenscheidt); the moving ethico-spiritual force behind the life of an individual, a language or a community
Geisteswissenschaften	The disciplines of Geist, the humanities (juxtaposed to the natural sciences or <i>Naturwissenschaften</i>)
Geisteswissenschaftler	Researcher, scholar in the humanities
Gemeinschaft	Community, collectivity, organic community. In organicist thought this term is frequently juxtaposed to <i>Gesellschaft</i> , the latter being assumed to be held together by the 'artificial' institutions of the modern state.
Generalgouvernement	The General Government, area of central and southern Poland not annexed to the Reich, ruled from Cracow as a German colony by Hans Frank
Germanischer Wissenschaftseinsatz	German scholarly occupation (academic intervention in certain occupied territories, especially Norway)

	Germanistik	The disciplines of German studies, including linguistics, literary criticism, folklore, legal customs, folk religion etc.
	Gesellschaft	Society, organization (see <i>Gemeinschaft</i>)
BBG	Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums	Law for the restoration of the professional civil service, the 1933 law that led to the dismissal of those seen as politically or racially undesirable.
FRG		Federal Republic of Germany
GDR		German Democratic Republic
	Gleichschaltung	Political co-ordination. The bringing into line of public and private institutions after the Nazi seizure of power, often involving the replacement of existing leaders by pro-Nazi figures and the dismissal of non-Aryans and the politically suspect.
	Grenzdeutschtum,	Germans living in areas adjacent to
	Grenzlanddeutschtum	the Reich
	Grossstadt	City
	Hakenkreuz	Swastika
	Handbuch	Handbook, guide, survey
HA	Hauptamt	Head office, main office
	Hauptamt Wissenschaft	The office within the Rosenberg Bureau specifically concerned with scholarly activity and the vetting of university personnel
	Heimat	Homeland
	Heimatkunde	The study of one's home region or of a particular locale as a cultural landscape, including its geography, customs, house-building-styles, costumes, etc.
	Heimatvertreibung	see <i>Vertreibung</i>
	Historikerstreit	Polemical debate among German historians about how the Nazi era should be evaluated, what ethical judgements are appropriate for particular actions within that period (e.g. German resistance to the advancing Soviet army on the eastern front), and how and to what extent the period should be understood comparatively when examined with the normal tools of historical analysis

HJ	Hitlerjugend	The Hitler Youth
	Hochschule	Tertiary educational institution
	Hochsprache	High or standard language
	Hohe Schule der NSDAP	Advanced School of the Nazi Party
	Indo-Aryan	A sub-branch of the Indo-Iranian branch of Indo-European, the most prominent member of which is Sanskrit
	Indo-Germanic, Indogermanisch	German term for Indo-European
	Indo-European	A postulated family of genetically related languages, of which the modern Indic, Romance, Celtic, Slavic and Germanic languages are examples
	Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage	Institute for Research on the Jewish Question, Frankfurt, founded by Alfred Rosenberg
IDO	Institut für deutsche Ostarbeit, Krakau	Institute for German work in the East (projected as the basis for a new Nazi university in Cracow)
IfZ	Institut für Zeitgeschichte, München	Institute for Contemporary History Munich
	Jahrbuch	Yearbook
	Jiddistik	Yiddish studies
	Jude	Jew
	Judentum	Jewry
	Judenfrei	Empty of Jews, purged of Jews (of a territory)
	Junggrammatiker	The Neogrammarians, a nineteenth century school of linguistics that reached its apogee in the work of Hermann Paul in the early twentieth century. A key doctrine of this school was the notion of exceptionless sound-laws. This school was rejected by many linguists of the Nazi period on account of its alleged materialism and positivism. The notion of an exceptionless sound-law seemed to many to take language outside the sphere of human will, culture and human difference.
KfdK	Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur	Battle Union for German Culture, founded by Alfred Rosenberg in 1927, initially as a non-party organization
	Kraft	Force, strength, dynamic energy

Kriegseinsatz	Participation and support for the war-effort
Kultursprache	A ‘developed’ or ‘advanced’ language one which has developed a full range of ‘high functions’ and a mature literature
Kulturvolk	An advanced people, a civilized nation (contrasted with <i>Naturvolk</i> , a people living in a state of nature)
Langage	Language in general; in Saussurean linguistics, the total phenomenon of language, contrasted with the language system of a particular language at a particular time (<i>langue</i>)
Langue	In Saussurean linguistics, a language seen as a system at a given point in time; the language system as a synchronic structure (juxtaposed to <i>parole</i> , the act of speaking or the collectivity of such acts, the language system in use in particular contexts)
Lebensraum	Living space, territory viewed as necessary for the expansion of the German homeland in east Europe and beyond. A term associated with Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904). The key figure in the geopolitics of the Nazi period was Karl Haushofer (1869–1946). See Dijkink (1996: 17–35) for a summary of German geopolitical theory.
Leistung	Achievement, role, dynamic involvement
Leiter	Head, director
Literaturwissenschaft	The study of literature, literary and textual criticism
Machtergreifung	The Nazi take-over, the seizure of power in 1933
<i>Mein Kampf</i>	My Struggle, title of Hitler’s political autobiography.
MHD	Mittelhochdeutsch
MHG	Middle High German
Minderbelastet	Less tainted, slightly tainted (terminology from the Denazification process carried out by the Allies after the war)
Mitläufer	Accomplice

APPENDIX

	Mitteilungen	Bulletin
	Monatsheft	Monthly journal, periodical
	Mundart	Dialect
	Mundartforschung	Dialectology
	Mutterboden	Mother territory, mother soil
	Mutterland	Motherland
	Muttersprache	Mother-tongue
	Namenforschung	Onomastics
	Nationalitätenkunde	The study of questions of nationality, identity and ethnicity
NHD	Neuhochdeutsch	New High German
NHG		New High German
NS	Nationalsozialismus, nationalsozialistisch	National Socialism, National Socialist
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische deutsche Arbeiterpartei	The National Socialist Party, the Nazi Party
NSDDB/	Nationalsozialistischer	The Nazi Lecturers' Union, the Nazi
NSDDOZB	Deutscher Dozentenbund	Professors Union
NSDStB	Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund	The Nazi Students' Union
NSLB	Nationalsozialistischer Lehrerbund	The Nazi Teachers' Union
NSV	Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt	Nazi folk welfare organization
	Nebensprache	A related or parallel language, as in 'Dutch is a <i>Nebensprache</i> of German'
OHG		Old High German
	Ordinarius	Full chair professor
	Organicism, organicist	View that languages, societies, communities, literary works, etc. are or should be integrated wholes, rooted in natural or holistic forms of organization. Organicism involves a rejection of so-called mechanical (mechanistic) and artificial structures and unities.
	Organismusgedanke	Organicist approach, idea (see above)
	Ostforschung	Research into Eastern Europe under the Nazis (contrasted with the less ideologically laden

	Ostjude	Eastern European Jew, Yiddish-speaking Jew
	Ostmark	Nazi name for Austria
	Parteikanzlei, Partei-Kanzlei	Nazi Party Chancellery/Chancery, directed by Martin Bormann
	Persönlicher Stab	Personal staff
	Philologie	Philology. This term is used in a variety of ways. One of the aims of traditional philology is to rectify and clarify the history of a language as found in its texts. Philology was a tool of textual criticism, crucial in distinguishing accurate from corrupt textual transmission. Kelley (1994: 3011) begins a discussion of ‘Philology and history’ with the following: ‘Philology refers to the critical study of literary texts with regard to style, structure and historical meaning. In this connection it has been associated for centuries with the study of history, understood especially in the sense of the past of Western (and by extension non-Western) culture through its written remains, and with the human sciences more generally.’ To simplify, one could say that this term has both a narrow meaning equivalent to ‘historical and comparative linguistics’ and a broad meaning in which it encompasses the study of the history, folklore, culture, legal system, literature, especially literary history, and linguistics of a particular people or group of peoples. It is in this latter sense that the term <i>Germanische Philologie</i> is used, a multi-disciplinary enterprise that embraced the study of all the cultures associated with Germanic languages. Some linguists in the Nazi (and other) periods used the term ‘philology’ to describe an obscurantist obsession with linguistic details, treating languages as ‘dead facts’ rather than living organisms.
	Promotion	Doctorate
PuSt	Publikationsstelle	Publications office
	Rasse	Race
RUSHA	Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS	Race and Settlement Head Office of the SS

	Rassenkunde	Race studies, race theory
	Rassenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP	Office of Race Politics of the Nazi Party
	Reich	Empire, realm, kingdom. 'The first Reich' referred to the Holy Roman Empire, the second to the German empire declared in 1871, and the third to the Nazi state with its annexed territories. The term 'The Third Reich' was used as the title of Moeller van den Bruck's book of 1923 and subsequently taken over by the Nazis. Hitler eventually took against the term.
	Reichsdeutsche(r)	German who is a citizen of the Reich
REM	Reichserziehungsminister, Reichserziehungsministerium	Reich minister of education, Reich education ministry
	Reichsinstitut für die Geschichte des neuen Deutschland	Reich Institute for the History of the New Germany, directed by Walter Frank
RL	Reichsleiter	Reich leader, someone charged by Hitler with an important task or office. Himmler and Goebbels held this title, as did Alfred Rosenberg.
	Reichssippenamt	Reich Genealogical Office
RFSS	Reichsführer SS	Reich leader of the SS (Himmler)
RKFDV	Reichskommissar für die Festigung des deutschen Volkstums	Reich commissioner for the strengthening of German nationhood (Himmler)
	Reichskulturkammer	Reich Chamber of Culture
	Reichsschrifttumskammer	Reich Chamber of Literature
	Reichssicherheitshauptamt	Reich Security Main Office, the umbrella organization for the Sicherheitsdienst, the Gestapo and the Kriminalpolizei and other branches of the security services under the overall control of the SS
	Reichspressekammer	Reich Press Chamber
	Reichsminister für die besetzen Ostgebiete	Reich Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories (Rosenberg)
	Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda	Reich Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda (led by Goebbels)
	Rektor	Rector, the academic head of a university of institute of higher learning
	Rotwelsch	Secret language of the German underworld, with a directed by Reinhard Heydrich. This branch of the

	intelligence services was mainly concerned with political opposition within Germany (including the NSDAP) and with the monitoring of public opinion and morale. However the SD was also involved in intelligence gathering outside the Reich. Many of its functions were gradually taken over by the Gestapo.
Sippe, Sippschaft	Clan, tribe, community of blood-relatives
Sippenkunde, Sippenforschung	Genealogy, genealogical research
Sonderaktion	Special operation, intervention
Sonderführer	Special operative with some operational autonomy
Sprachamt	Language office
Sprachenkampf	Language rivalry within a national or ethnic community
Sprachgenosse	Comrade in the language, fellow German speaker
Sprachpflege	Linguistic purism, the conscious intervention in the state of the language in order to maintain standards, purity, continuity, etc.
Stab	Staff
Staat	State
Stilbruch	A rupture in stylistic unity
Sprachatlas	Linguistic atlas, dialect atlas
Sprachgeist	The 'soul', unique character, mental articulation associated with a particular language
Sprachgemeinschaft	Linguistic community, community formed by the speakers of a common language, speech community
Sprachinhalt	Linguistic content, inner form on the semantic plane
Sprachinhaltsforschung	School of linguistics concerned with the study of linguistic inner form or conceptual content (associated with Leo Weisgerber).
Sprachvolk	Nation or people defined by a common language
Sprachwissenschaft	Linguistics (sometimes meaningfully contrasted with the term <i>Linguistik</i>)

	SS-Hauptamt-Sicherheitspolizei	SS-Main Office Security Police, the predecessor to the Reichssicherheits-Hauptamt
	Stamm	Tribe, lineage, racial or ethnic stock
	Stammgebiet	Heartland
	structuralism	Theory or set of theories which see different aspects of human behaviour as explicable in relation to underlying or tacit systems or structures. In linguistics, this underlying structure was the language system, the categories of which were viewed as interdefining and interdetermining. Knowledge of the same linguistic system was what speakers of the same language shared and the basis of their ability to communicate. A structuralist would argue for example that the word 'green' in English was not a direct equivalent of the German 'grün', because each word is implicated in a set of different contrasts in its own language. Structuralist analysis involves trying to find the underlying categories that determine human behaviour or make it meaningful. One potential radical aspect of structuralist theory was its marginalization of historical continuity. Its presentation of the history of a language as a succession of mutually incompatible states represented a challenge to the cultural entrenched view that languages grow and develop, accumulating gradually the wisdom and insights of a people.
SA	Sturmabteilung der NSDAP	Storm-troop division of the Nazi Party
	Tagung	Meeting, conference
	TH Technische Hochschule	Technical College
	Thing (Ding)	Cultic Germanic theatre
	Überseed Deutschum	Overseas Germans
	Umgangssprache	Informal, everyday speech
uk-Stellung	unabkömmlich-Stellung	Official certification that one should be exempt from military service, on the grounds that one is needed in civilian employment, etc.
	Urheimat	Original, ancestral homeland

Verein	Association, club
Vertreibung	The forced expulsion of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe after Germany's defeat in 1945.
Vierteljahrschrift	Quarterly journal
Volk	Folk-nation, people, national stock (various defined by different theorists in terms of commonalties of race, language, history, territory, culture, etc.). The translator of Hitler's <i>Mein Kampf</i> , James Murphy (1939: 13), commented that the word <i>Volk</i> 'is sometimes translated as People; but the German word, <i>Volk</i> , means the whole body of the people without any distinction of class or caste. It is a primary word also that suggests what might be called the basic national stock.'
Völkerfamilie	Family of nations
Völkerkunde	Ethnology
Volkgenosse	Comrade in the people, national comrade, fellow German
Volkhaft	Folkish, of the character of the folk-nation
Völkisch	Folkish, pertaining to the essential character of the folk-nation
Volklich	Folkish, of the character of the folk-nation
Volkbildung	The formation (construction) of the people, of the folk-nation
Volksbildung	The education and development of the people, of the folk-nation
Volksdeutsche	Ethnic Germans, folk Germans. Germans who live in permanent communities outside the Reich, such as the ethnic Germans in Poland, the Baltic States, etc. These Germans tended not to be German citizens. Under the Nazis, some of these ethnic German settlements on the borders of the Reich were incorporated into Germany by annexation or resettlement. The term was sometimes contrasted with <i>Auslandsdeutscher</i> , which referred to expatriate German citizens.

VDA	Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland	The League for Germans Abroad
VOMI	Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle	Ethnic German Liaison Office or German Racial Assistance Office, founded in 1936 and directed by Werner Lorenz
	Volksgemeinschaft	Folk-community, the nation as ethnic community
	Volksgruppe	Small ethnic community
	Volkskörper	The body of the folk-nation; the folk as abstract-physical unity
	Volkskraft	Ethnic vitality, the vitality of the folk-nation
	Volkskunde	Folklore, folklore studies
	Volkstum	National folk-culture, national characteristics, essential cultural legacy associated with the national stock
	Volkstumskampf	The struggle for racial and cultural survival
	Vorgeschichte	Prehistory
	Wandervogelbewegung	German Youth Movement with an emphasis on healthy outdoor activities such as hiking
	Wandervolk	Migratory people
	Wartheland	Area of western Poland annexed to the German Reich in 1940
	Wehrmacht	The German Armed Forces
	Weltanschauung	World view. A key term in Nazi discourse, used as a cover term for matters of politics and ideology. For example, academics were assessed for their soundness in matters of 'world view'. The term also reflects the cultural relativism that was at the heart of Nazi ideology, i.e. the attack on universalist theories such as humanism, communism and the Enlightenment legacy. In this context it may be useful to quote from the enthusiastic translator of Hitler's <i>Mein Kampf</i> , James Murphy (1939: 13): '[. . .] I have left the word <i>Weltanschauung</i> stand in its original form very often. We have no one English word to convey the same meaning as the German word, and it would have burdened the text too much if I

were to use the circumlocution each time the word occurs. *Weltanschauung* literally means “Outlook on the World.” But as generally used in German this outlook on the world means a whole system of ideas associated together in an organic unity – ideas of human life, human values, cultural and religious ideas, politics, economics, etc., in fact a totalitarian view of human existence.’

	Weltbild, Weltsicht	World view, view of the world. A key notion in linguistics under National Socialism was the idea that languages structure the way their speakers see the world. These terms were often used as an alternative to the more directly ideological <i>Weltanschauung</i>
	Weltbürger	Citizen of the world
	Wesen	Being, essence
	Westjiddisch	Western Yiddish, the dialects of Yiddish formerly spoken (roughly speaking) in the Germanic language territories of Europe (Austria, Denmark, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Alsace, etc.). Contrasts with Eastern Yiddish, spoken in Poland, Romania, Lithuania, Ukraine etc. Western Yiddish was in decline by the beginning of the nineteenth century, though pockets of speakers have survived into the late twentieth century.
	Wissenschaft	Academic and scientific inquiry
	Wissenschaftliches Hauptamt	See <i>Hauptamt Wissenschaft</i>
	Wortfeld	Word field, a set of interlocking or interrelated terms in the vocabulary of a language
	Wortfeldtheorie	Word field theory; a structuralist approach to the study of the lexicon
	Wortschatz	Vocabulary, lexicon
YIVO	yidisher visntshaftlekher institut	Yiddish Scientific Institute, formerly based in Vilnius, Poland. The headquarters is now in New York. The organization is now known as The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.
	Zeitschrift	Journal, periodical
	Zentrale	Headquarters, head-office

SS ranks and roughly equivalent US Army ranks

Reichsführer-SS	General of the army
SS-Oberstgruppenführer	General
SS-Obergruppenführer	Lieutenant General
SS-Gruppenführer	Major General
SS-Brigadeführer	Brigadier-General
SS-Oberführer	Brigadier-General
SS-Standartenführer	Colonel
SS-Obersturmbannführer	Lieutenant Colonel
SS-Sturmbannführer	Major
SS-Hauptsturmführer	Captain
SS-Obersturmführer	1st lieutenant
SS-Untersturmführer	2nd lieutenant

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

- 1 General sources for biographical information include: published university rolls (e.g. Asen 1955; Auerbach 1979; Chroust 1993); *Kürschners Deutscher Gelehrten-Kalender*, particularly the 1940/1 edition (ed. G. Lüdke, published by Walter de Gruyter, Berlin); various editions of *Wer ist wer?*; the *Internationales Biographisches Archiv* (Munziger-Archiv) and other biographical dictionaries (e.g. Sturm 1972); studies of individual universities in the Third Reich (e.g. Adams 1977; John *et al.* 1991); surveys of scholarship in particular fields (e.g. Hentschel 1996; Renneberg and Walker 1994b); biographical reference works for particular academic disciplines (Hesse 1995; Leaman 1993); general reference works on Nazi Germany (Benz *et al.* 1997).
- 2 The races were *nordisch*, *westisch*, *dinarisch*, *ostisch*, *ostbaltisch*, *fälisch*.
- 3 The Newsletter of the Association for the Study of Language in Prehistory.
- 4 See for example H.F.K. Günther's discussion of Jews and language (1930: 254–60).

1 WHOSE HISTORY?

- 1 For a review, see Mühlher (1943).
- 2 Leo Weisgerber subsequently objected to Funke's characterization of the 'romantic group' (Weisgerber 1930a).
- 3 Cassirer (1874–1945); Ipsen (1899–1984). In addition to NSDAP (joined 1 May 1933, no. 5089913), Ipsen was also a member of the SA (joined 5 May 1933) and the NSLB (1 June 1934). See biographical details in Leaman (1993: 34, 52–3) and Yivo/IfZg 116/6.
- 4 Bühler's wife, a Protestant, was of Jewish descent.
- 5 There is, however, a degree of anachronism in this discussion. Saussure's status as the founder of linguistics is as much the product of post-Second World War linguistics as it is of the pre-Second World War period.
- 6 See Maas (1988a: 262ff.) for further discussion.
- 7 See also Bally's article in *Le français moderne* of June–July 1940.
- 8 For a brief list of publications by Belgian linguists during the war, see Deroy (1947).
- 9 Germany invaded Denmark on 9 April 1940 (Craig 1978: 717).
- 10 Bröcker (born 1902) joined the NSDAP on 31 January 1940, having applied on 3 June 1939 (no. 8367438). Bröcker had been Heidegger's *Assistent* in Freiburg in 1933, and Heidegger supported the publication of Bröcker's 1935 book on Aristotle (Leaman 1993: 33). In a footnote, the authors remark that the article had been intended for the *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure* in Geneva, but that this proved impossible 'for reasons which cannot be explained here' (1942/3: 24n).

- 11 The 1944 volume also included contributions from Alan S.C. Ross, Henri Frei and Thomas Sebeok.
- 12 (1891–1942) Winkler taught at the University of Vienna, then Heidelberg and from 1938 at the University of Berlin. He was a Romance scholar, linguist and stylistician, and the editor, with E. Gamillscheg, of the *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur*. See also Winkler (1933, 1935) and Richter's 1935 review of Winkler (1933).
- 13 Vittorio Santoli, University of Florence.
- 14 Winkler was a speaker at a conference of German philologists and schoolteachers held under the auspices of the National Socialist Teachers Union (NSLB) in Trier from 27 to 31 October 1934. His talk, 'Sprachtheorie und Sprachforschung', was later published in the *Zeitschrift für neusprachlichen Unterricht* (Winkler 1935).
- 15 Ludwig Erich Schmitt (born 1908) attained the Promotion in 1934, and the Habilitation in 1941, both in Leipzig. After the war he taught at the University of Leipzig, but his elevation to Ordinarius was blocked 'for political reasons'. His subsequent career was in the FRG (Auerbach 1979: 604).
- 16 On this topic, see also Bruckner (1942).
- 17 The dictionary eventually began to appear in 1968 (Bretschneider 1968–80). Bretschneider, born 24 August 1898, was accepted into the NSDAP on 1 August 1932, no. 1277168 (Lixfeld 1994: 45–6, 237). Bretschneider's role in the linguistics of the Third Reich has been researched by Gerd Simon, particularly in relation to the career of Georg Schmidt-Rohr (Simon 1986a). Bretschneider relied on advice from particular chosen experts, in particular the dialectologist Bernhard Martin (for an example of his work, see Martin 1939), and worked unobtrusively in the background. After the war Bretschneider continued her career in dialectology as an academician in the Akademie der Wissenschaften in Berlin (GDR). Bretschneider is the subject of a forthcoming study by Gerd Simon (forthcoming a).
- 18 Wundt was later rejected in favour of Watson and Saussure virtually dismissed 'as a perpetuator of the endemic psychologism of late-nineteenth-century approaches to language' (see Harris 1981: 97ff. and 1987: xii–xiii).
- 19 Porzig (born 30 March 1895) for example was an active and enthusiastic member of the NSDAP (membership no. 3397875, date of entry 1 January 1934) and the NSLB (no. 324430, joined 1 May 1935). Porzig was Schulungsleiter in der Ortsgruppe Jena-West der NSDAP and Blockwart. Porzig served in the army in Norway, and was interned in Darmstadt in 1945, during which time he wrote *Das Wunder der Sprache* (Simon 1990a: 84). To the list of central figures one might add André Jolles. Jolles was recruited by the SD (Sicherheitsdienst) in 1937 (Lerchenmüller and Simon 1997: 37–8).
- 20 In the political arena Chomsky takes a prescriptivist–normativist view of public discourse, talking of propaganda and 'modes of distortion' (1979, 1991). On Chomsky in relation to Holocaust denial, see Lipstadt (1994: 15–17).
- 21 For a summary of Simon's charges against Maas, see Simon (1990a: 92). For Maas' reply, see Maas (1990).
- 22 Simon (1986a: 527) analyses the term *Wende* ('turning-point'), and its use by Georg Schmidt-Rohr to salute the dawning of a new era in which individualism and egoism would give way to communal altruism.

- 23 Maas (1988a: 275) argues that question of whether there was a ‘Nazi linguistics’ cannot be given a global answer.
- 24 See the detailed institutional, biographical and historical discussion in Lerchenmüller (1997).
- 25 Moser also cites the Viennese linguist and Indo-Europeanist Paul Kretschmer in a footnote. Kretschmer was on the editorial board of the journal *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* during the war, when it was a publication of Himmler’s scholarly organization, the *Ahnenerbe*. Moser himself was criticized by Uriel Weinreich for anti-Semitism (Weinreich 1958: 43n), and by Walter Boehlich in terms described by Hermann Bausinger as ‘somewhat hysterical’ (Boehlich 1964b; Conrady 1974: 239–57; Bausinger 1994: 15). For Moser’s views on ethnicity and language, folk character, group character and ‘tribal character’ (*Stammescharakter*), see Moser (1951). On Spamer, see Jacobeit (1994), Lixfeld (1994: 35–60). On Maurer, who was also a member of the SA from 1933–5, see Hermann (1991).

2 THE DEFENCE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

- 1 This proclamation was issued on 11 November 1933 in Leipzig. Among the organizers of the Leipzig proclamation was the philosophy professor Hans Heyse, newly appointed rector of the University of Königsberg (Sluga 1993: 168). Previously three hundred professors had signed a statement in support of Hitler in the 3 March 1933 edition of the *Völkischer Beobachter* (Assion 1994: 117).
- 2 See Aarsleff (1988: lxi–lxx), Joseph (1991), Manchester (1982).
- 3 University of Köln. Hans Kuhn became Professor of Nordic Philology at the University of Berlin in 1941. Kuhn was a member of the NSDAP (Boden 1995: 374).
- 4 Dialectologist, University of Marburg (1888–1976) and a member of the NSDAP (see below).
- 5 1886–1968, University of Leipzig. Frings was re-employed in Leipzig immediately after the war, implying that he had not been a member of the NSDAP, since only former party members and members of affiliate organizations were classed as ‘politically contaminated’ by the authorities (see Boden 1995: 373–4 on Frings and for discussion of academic politics in the period 1945–58 in the Soviet Occupation Zone and GDR).
- 6 For an introduction to the question of Heidegger, academic philosophy and National Socialism, see Leaman (1993). Heidegger’s 1933 inaugural address as rector to the University of Freiburg has been reprinted (Heidegger 1990). There is a massive academic literature on the question of Heidegger’s politics and National Socialism (see for example Ott 1994; Rockmore and Margolis 1992). Rosen (1994) reviews a number of books on Heidegger’s politics.
- 7 On Gadamer and National Socialism, see Orozco (1995).
- 8 Eugen Fischer was the author of *Die Rehobother Bastards und das Bastardierungsproblem beim Menschen* (1913) as well as other works on racial hygiene (Fischer 1933a, b; see Burleigh and Wippermann 1991: 38; Weingart *et al.* 1992: 407–24). As director of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut für Anthropologie, menschliche Erblehre und Eugenik he was an enthusiastic promoter of the Nazis’ policies on race and eugenics. Another senior figure in the institute was the racial theorist Wilhelm Abel (Burleigh and Wippermann, 1991: 38, 52, 129–30). Fischer’s institute was supported in the 1930s by the Rockefeller Foundation in the United States (Kühn 1994).
- 9 Neumann taught at Göttingen, then Leipzig. He was a member of the NSDAP (Jansen 1993: 388). In addition he played an important role in the Dozentenbund and acted as an expert

consultant for the Rosenberg Bureau. This gave him the power to influence appointments and promotions. In the mid-1930s Neumann was chairman of the Gesellschaft für Deutsche Bildung (previously the Germanistenverband) which was affiliated to the National Socialist Teachers League (Simon 1990a: 82–3). For Neumann, the key figures in the history of linguistic thought are Herder and Grimm (see Neumann 1939, 1941).

- 10 For a discussion of the terms *Blut* and *Rasse* in the context of linguistic purism, see Simon (1987a: 282–3).
- 11 There is a substantial literature in the Third Reich concerned with Rudyard Kipling. For a review, see Mertner (1943).
- 12 On Kossinna, prehistory and Nazi ideology, see Reinerth (1932a, b, c), Arnold and Hassmann (1995).
- 13 Subsequently he taught at the University of Heidelberg and was rector there from 1 April 1937 to 1 October 1938. In addition to being a member of the NSDAP, Krieck was an Unterscharführer in the SS and prominent in the NSD-Dozentenbund. However he came into conflict with the Rassenpolitisches Amt and Heydrich, and resigned from the SS and from his post as rector of the University of Heidelberg in 1938. He also fell foul of the Rosenberg Bureau (Leaman 1993: 56). Krieck was the editor of explicitly pro-Nazi journal *Volk im Werden*. On Krieck (1882–1947), see Müller (1978), Sluga (1993), Stuchlik (1984).
- 14 Joachim Haupt (b. 1900) joined the NSDAP in 1922, rejoined in 1927. Haupt was Hochschulgruppenführer of the NSDStB in Kiel from 1926–8, and worked as a teacher in Kiel, Plön and Razteburg before being dismissed in 1931 for his political activities. Haupt was dismissed from his party and government posts in 1935 after allegations of homosexuality (see biographical summary, Grüttner 1995: 508).
- 15 Born 1903. Benno von Wiese is one of the century's most distinguished scholars of German literature. He taught at the universities of Bonn (1929), Erlangen (1932), Münster (1943) and then Bonn (1949).
- 16 For a further critique of the system in this regard, see Hellwig (1936).
- 17 See also Fricke (1933) for a further proposal for reform in the tertiary institutions.
- 18 (1887–1969). Freyer taught at the universities of Leipzig (1920), Kiel (1922) and again in Leipzig from 1925 where he was Professor of Sociology. In 1934 he became director of the Institut für Kultur- und Universalgeschichte and of the Staatliche Forschungsanstalt. He was a guest professor in Budapest from 1938–44, and director of the Deutsches Wissenschaftliches Institut there from 1940–4. He taught at the University of Ankara from 1954–55, then at the University of Münster from 1955 (Leaman 1993: 40; Rammstedt 1986: 100).
- 19 The philosopher and pedagogue Theodor Litt (1880–1962) was appointed to Bonn University in 1919, then Leipzig University from 1920. Though he did not condemn National Socialism in its entirety, Litt came under criticism for his 'liberalism' by colleagues and students at the University of Leipzig, and he applied for early retirement (Leaman 1993: 62–3). Gadamer in a memoir recorded that Litt was obliged to retire on political grounds (quoted in Orozco 1995: 97). Litt was forbidden to hold public lectures in 1941 (*Redeverbot*), but was permitted to publish until 1943 (Leaman 1993: 63).
- 20 The editorial board consisted of A. Fischer, Wilhelm Flitner, Theodor Litt, H. Nohl and Eduard Spranger.
- 21 'der aufgedeckte Lebenszusammenhang fordert nicht weniger nachdrücklich die Beseelung der

- Vergangenheit aus der Gegenwart, als die Beseelung der Gegenwart aus der Vergangenheit.'
- 22 Born 1898. Günther was professor at the University of Neuchâtel.
- 23 Rothacker (1888–1965) joined the NSDAP on 1 May 1933, membership no. 2081851. He was professor in Heidelberg and Bonn (Leaman 1993: 73). On Rothacker's views of will and race, see Leaman (1994: 43). Kluckhohn (1886–1957) taught at the University of Münster, the TH Danzig, and the universities of Vienna and Tübingen (from 1931).
- 24 Ittenbach was admitted to the NSDAP on 1 February 1937. In Danzig he led the working party for German studies in the pedagogy and education department of the Gau-Danzig branch of the Nazi Teachers Union. After his sojourn in Belgium, Ittenbach was Professor für Altgermanistik und Volkskunde at the newly founded University of Posen. He went missing on the eastern front at the end of the war (Hesse 1995: 389). Ittenbach was one of the contributors to the collection *Von deutscher Art und Dichtung*, the show-piece anthology of National Socialist *Germanistik*.
- 25 The text is reproduced in Reiss (1973: 99–100). Petersen, a student of Erich Schmidt, (1878–1941) taught at the universities of Munich, Yale, Basel, Frankfurt am Main and Berlin. Hermann Pongs (born 1889; member of the NSDAP) taught at the University of Marburg, then at the TH Stuttgart until 1954. Pongs opened his 1934 article 'Krieg als Volksschicksal im deutschen Schrifttum' with a quotation from Goebbels' speech on the opening of the Reich Chamber of Culture arguing for an organic relationship between art and the life of the *Volk*. For detailed discussion of the evolution of *Euphorion*, see Adam (1994), Boden (1994) and Dainat (1994b). On Petersen, Pongs and the debate about *Germanistik* in the Third Reich, see Conrady (1974: 233–57). For the analysis of another important journal, see Mallmann (1978) on *Das innere Reich*, edited by Paul Alverdes and Karl Benno von Mechow.
- 26 The full title of the journal was *Wörter und Sachen: Kulturhistorische Zeitschrift für Sprach- und Sachforschung*, published by Carl Winter in Heidelberg. Meringer, an Indo-Europeanist and Sanskrit scholar, was appointed to the University of Graz in 1899 after completing a doctorate and teaching at the University of Vienna (Eberhart 1994: 158).
- 27 'Vorwort', pp. 1–2, signed 'Die Herausgeber'.
- 28 'Vorbemerkung', signed 'Die Schriftleitung'. The editorial board became H. Güntert, W. Meyer-Lübke and L. Weisgerber.
- 29 Güntert was a member of the NSDAP, like his friend and colleague, the classicist and folklorist Eugen Fehrle. Güntert persuaded Fehrle to take up the chair at Heidelberg to which he had been nominally appointed, and Fehrle's appointment was confirmed by the Ministry on 6 May 1936 (Assion 1994: 118).
- 30 Gerd Simon (personal communication).
- 31 The text is reproduced in Reiss (1973: 89–8). Karl Viëtor (1892–1951) taught in Frankfurt am Main, from 1925 he was ordentlicher Professor at Giessen University, then emigrated to the USA in 1936. In 1937 he became Kuno Francke Professor of German Art and Culture at Harvard University (Reiss 1973: 142).
- 32 Gerd Simon (personal communication).
- 33 The editorial board in 1939 consisted of among others Dr Alfred Hühnhäuser (Berlin), Doz. Dr Clemens Lugowski (Königsberg), Professor Dr Friedrich Neumann (Göttingen). Ministerialrat Hühnhäuser was also involved in the publication of the volume *Beiträge zum neuen Deutschunterricht* (edited by Kreisschulrat Alfred Pudelko, 1939).

- 34 Paul Ritterbusch was the author of a number of programmatic works on the role of universities and scholarship under National Socialism (e.g. Ritterbusch 1942).
- 35 The *Kriegseinsatz der Germanisten* was a subproject of the *Kriegseinsatz der Geisteswissenschaften* led by Paul Ritterbusch.
- 36 The editorial committee of the *Zeitschrift für Deutschkunde* in 1939 was Gerhard Fricke, Max Vanselow and Joachim Müller. For a discussion of *Deutschkunde* in the Third Reich, see Hopster (1985).
- 37 On the study of Shakespeare under Nazism, see von Ledebur (1988).
- 38 H. Banniza v. Bazan was the author of works on the foundations of *Volkssippenforschung* (1934, 1937).
- 39 Trier joined the NSDAP in 1933 (see Chapter 4).
- 40 On Vacher de Lapouge (1854–1936) see Poliakov (1974: 269–70). Lapouge predicted a race war and mass extermination in Europe (Poliakov 1974: 270).
- 41 The previous editor was Hermann Teuchert (Rostock); the editorial board consisted of A. Bachmann, K. Bohnenberger, Th. Frings, G. Kloeke, P. Lessiak, A. Scheiner, F. Wrede (volume 8, 1931/2).
- 42 Mitzka (born Posen 27 February 1888, died 8 November 1976) applied to join the NSDAP in 1933 (in Danzig, on 5 May, no. 2845219) but his application fell foul of the subsequently declared cap on membership. In a decision by the Party dated 3 August 1939 Mitzka was given a new membership number (5401771), valid from 1 May 1937 (questionnaire dated 14 July 1937, in BDC PK 1080020820). Mitzka was a member of the Deutsche Akademie (Abteilung: Deutsche Sprache). According to the official Marburg University biography, Mitzka was required by the NSDAP to stand down as dean of the Philosophical Faculty at the University of Marburg in 1935. After the war, Mitzka was suspended from his academic post on 3 March 1947, but reinstated as director of the German Linguistic Atlas on 21 December 1948 (Auerbach 1979: 571–2).
- 43 It was entitled ‘Lautdenkmal reichsdeutscher Mundarten zur Zeit Adolf Hitlers’ (Mitzka 1944: 168).
- 44 Founded by Herman Riegel, edited by Oskar Streicher (volume 48, 1933). See von Polenz (1967, 1979), Simon (1986c, 1986d, 1989a), Török (1979). The politics of language standardization is treated in Simon (1979b, 1985a, 1987a, 1987b, 1989a, 1990b) and Klein (1982), the last a discussion of Italy under fascism. Kämper-Jensen (1993) gives a summary of several pieces from the journal.
- 45 On ‘Sammellager’ etc., see Polenz (1967: 120).
- 46 A letter from the ministry of education dated 19 November 1940 stated that Hitler was opposed to the artificial purification of the German language, since this involved Germanizing of foreign borrowings (Polenz 1967: 137–8). This was, however, not quite the end of linguistic purism in the Third Reich, as the case of Alsace showed (Simon 1989a: 77–81).
- 47 These organizations had overlapping memberships. For example, Erich Gierach was a member of the Deutsche Akademie and a committee member in the Sprachverein (Simon 1989a: 68).
- 48 See the notice in the *Zeitschrift für deutsche Bildung* 18: 160.
- 49 The published report states that ‘Herr Behaghel beantragt, zur Verjüngung des Gesamtvorstandes die Zahl der von ihm zu berufenden Mitglieder auf 6 zu erhöhen’ (*Muttersprache* 48: 62).
- 50 Full title: *Englische Studien. Organ für englische Philologie, unter Mitberücksichtigung des*

englischen Unterrichts auf höheren Schulen, founded by Eugen Kölbing, ed. Johannes Hoops, University of Heidelberg. Volume 76 (1944) carries a necrology for Hoops' son, Reinald, killed in action in 1944. Reinald Hoops, Professor für Englische Philologie at the University of Innsbruck, had been co-editor of *Englische Studien* from volume 74.

- 51 Hans Galinsky, University of Berlin.
- 52 Founded by M. Trautmann and R. P. Wülker, edited by Hermann M. Flasdieck, Professor of English Philology at the University of Jena, then at the University of Köln from 1943.
- 53 Founded by Ludwig Herrig, edited by Wilhelm Horn and Gerhard Rohlfs (the latter was Karl Vossler's successor as Professor of Romance Philology in Munich).
- 54 The name change came into effect with volume 34 (1935). The editorial committee consisted of Ernst Zellmer and Hans Freck.
- 55 In a paper delivered at the 23rd conference of the association of modern philologists, von Wartburg maintained that only through experiencing the foreign do we really come to understand ourselves. The paper was entitled 'Über die Bildungswerte des sprachwissenschaftlichen Studiums' (Schwedtke 1934b: 199).
- 56 Eugen Lerch (Münster), a student of Adolf Tobler at the University of Berlin, was the author of a three-volume work on the historical syntax of French (1925–34). Iordan–Orr see him as a bridge between the Neogrammarian school and Vossler's idealist linguistics (1970: 24n, 128–32). On the grounds for his dismissal – apparently a mixture of the political and the racial (Lerch was living with a Jewish woman) – see Hausmann (1993: 3, 14), and Maas (1988a: 265n). Lerch is an anomalous figure; he continued to publish and after 1945 became a professor in Munich (Maas 1988a).
- 57 Wartburg, a Swiss, was professor at the University of Leipzig.
- 58 Arns was the compiler of an index of 'Anglo-Jewish literature' (Arns 1938) and contributed an article on this topic to the journal (1939). Gerhard Moldenhauer (born 1900, a member of the NSDAP, Hausmann 1993: 55) contributed an article on France and the Jews to volumes 36 and 37 (Moldenhauer 1937/8). This article is discussed briefly by Hausmann (1993: 104–5).
- 59 The full title of the journal was *Neuphilologische Monatsschrift. Zeitschrift für das Studium der angelsächsischen u. romanischen Kulturen*, edited by W. Hübner.
- 60 See Hausmann (1993: 103–43) for a discussion of ideas of race and German Romance scholarship under National Socialism.
- 61 Fritz Neubert (1886–1970) was taught at the University of Breslau from 1926 to 1943, then at the University of Berlin. Hausmann described Neubert as a kind of 'Nestor' of German Romance scholarship in the Third Reich, but one who attempted to maintain academic standards (1993: 103n). Neubert's dissertation was on folk views of physiognomy in France (1910). For further details, see Hausmann (1993: 129n, 129–30, 185–9).
- 62 Founded by Heinrich Schröder, edited by F. R. Schröder (University of Würzburg).
- 63 This article was contributed from the eastern front and dedicated to Theodor Litt. Born 1911, Gustav's Marburg dissertation concerned Herder and linguistic thought in the Goethe-period (1937).
- 64 Edited by Karl Haushofer (1869–1946) of the University of Munich and the Deutsche Akademie.
- 65 Full title: *Die Welt als Geschichte: Zeitschrift für universalgeschichtliche Forschung*, edited by Hans Erich Stier. In a Foreword to the first volume, Stier pledged the journal to serve the mission given by Hitler. The intellectual influence behind the journal was Spengler's ideas.

- 66 On Hans Weinert, a student of Eugen Fischer, see Deichmann (1995: 321) and Weingart *et al.* (1992: 608–10).
- 67 Edited by Walther von Wartburg.
- 68 Founded by Karl Vollmöller, edited by Fritz Schalk. On Schalk and the *Romanische Forschungen*, see Hausmann (1993: 71–101).
- 69 The title page read as follows in 1934 (volume 58): ‘begründet von Wilhelm Braune, Hermann Paul, Eduard Sievers, unter Mitwirkung von E. Karg-Gasterstädt, herausgegeben von Th. Frings.’
- 70 Founded by Julius Zacher, edited by Paul Merker (1881–1945) and Wolfgang Stammer (1886–1965). Merker taught in Leipzig, Greifswald and Breslau from 1928; Stammer at the TH Hannover, Dorpat and Greifswald from 1924–36 (Reiss 1973: 140–1).
- 71 Betz was a member of the NSDAP (no. 5426367), accepted on 1 May 1937 (BDC NSDAP card index).
- 72 Full title: *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung auf dem Gebiete der indogermanischen Sprachen*. The editorial committee consisted of Hanns Oertel, Eduard Schwyzer and Franz Specht.
- 73 See volume 7, 1936.
- 74 In volume 57, which is dated 1940, there is a tribute to Albert Debrunner who is stepping down from the editorial board at his own request. Mention is made of his high standing both at home and abroad. In a ‘spectacular exchange’, Debrunner, viewed as anti-Nazi, went to the University of Bern in 1935 and Porzig, his former student and an enthusiastic National Socialist, became professor in Jena (Simon 1990a: 84).
- 75 See Mallory (1989) for an accessible survey of the Indo-European question. Römer (1985) gives an extensive ideological critique of Indo-Europeanists and Germanic linguistics. On the Corded Ware question, see Mallory (1989: 108–9), Römer (1985: 82).
- 76 For a survey of Indo-European studies and discussion of Hans Krahe and the ‘Proto-Illyrian’ hypothesis, see Polomé (1995, especially 271–3). For Grabert’s *völkisch* approach to the study of religion, see Grabert (1938).
- 77 SS-Oberführer Senator Richard von Hoff, Bremen, editor of *Rasse*.
- 78 In 1924 Arntz took issue with Hermann Güntert’s defence of a Central Asian homeland, arguing that the links Güntert postulated between Indo-Germanic and East Asian languages were spurious, and that ‘race and blood-group research’ contradicted the theory’ (1924: 30). Gerd Simon informed me that Krahe attributed his exclusion from the ‘War-effort of the Indo-Europeanists’ (*Kriegseinsatz der Indogermanen*) by Gerhard Deeters to problems with his position on the homeland question. However Krahe also had a Jewish great-grandmother. Plans for the political co-ordination of the *Indogermanische Gesellschaft* and the journal *Indogermanische Forschungen* were shelved due to the small number of scholars involved and the number of foreign members (Simon, personal communication).
- 79 Further important sources for a general impression of German linguistics between 1933 and 1945 include the *Festschrift* for Otto Behaghel (Götze *et al.* 1934) with contributions on linguistic topics by Kurt Wagner (Marburg), Hans Kuhn (Marburg), Helmut Arntz (Honnaf am Rhein), Adolf Bach (Bonn), Wilhelm Will (Bonn), Alfred Götze (Giessen), Jost Trier (Münster), Friedrich Maurer (Erlangen), Fritz Stroh (Giessen), Wilhelm Horn (Berlin) and Ferdinand Holthausen (Wiesbaden). The *Festschrift* for Herman Hirt has a wealth of interesting articles, and is particularly revealing on the links between linguistics, race science and the disciplines of

culture (Arntz 1936). The second volume contains a contribution by Émile Benveniste. The collection *Von deutscher Art und Dichtung* (Fricke *et al.* 1941) was a grand survey of *Germanistik* in the Third Reich in five volumes. Volume 1, on language, was edited by Friedrich Maurer. Among the contributors were Leo Weisgerber, Walther Mitzka, Friedrich Kainz, Kurt Herbert Helbach, Ewald Geissler, Otto Höfler, Siegfried Gutenbrunner, Friedrich Neumann, Hans Naumann, Julius Schwietering, Benno von Wiese, Julius Petersen, Paul Kluckhohn, Paul Merker, Fritz Martini, Kurt May, Gerhard Fricke, Max Ittenbach, Friedrich Panzer, Franz Koch, Herbert Cysarz. For a contemporary review, see Hartmann (1943). Kämper-Jensen gives summaries of three articles from volume 1 of the *Jahrbuch der deutschen Sprache* (Basler 1941), and one from volume 2 (Götting 1944). Volume 2 of the *Jahrbuch der deutschen Sprache* published by the Deutsche Akademie contained in addition contributions by Wolfgang Krause, Georg Baesecke, Elisabeth Karg-Gasterstädt, Ulrich Pretzel, Theodor Frings and Ludwig Erich Schmitt, Alfred Götze, Walter Kunze, Friedrich v. der Leyen, Walther Mitzka, Eberhard Kranzmayer, Adolf Bach, Max Wachler, Ludwig Götting, Johannes Weinbender (Gierach 1944).

80 University of Münster.

81 Rohlfs was associated with positivism in linguistics, in opposition to Vossler's idealist school.

82 The article was entitled 'Zur Betrachtung der neufranzösischen Sprache von der Rasse her' and appeared in volume 50 of *Die neueren Sprachen. Beiträge aus Wissenschaft und Schule zur Erkenntnis fremdvölkischen Wesens und ihrer Auswertung im Unterricht an Schulen des In- und Auslandes. In Verbindung mit der Reichsverwaltung des NS-Lehrerbundes, Reichsgebiet Neuere Sprachen*. Hr. Fischer, G. Gräfer. Diesterweg: Frankfurt.

83 As far as I know Niederstenbruch (born 1905) did not hold a university position (he does not appear in Kürschner). His Promotion was from the University of Bonn (Niederstenbruch 1927). This work is cited in Havers 1931: 266). In the *Zeitschrift für neusprachlichen Unterricht* Niederstenbruch's address was given as Northeim (Hannover).

3 ACADEMIC POLITICS

1 Hitler, Rosenberg and others did, however, attempt to use Nietzsche as an intellectual forerunner. Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche had Hitler's ear, was able to promote a distorted view of her brother's writings in the Third Reich (Zapata 1994; Gerd Simon, personal communication).

2 On Stalin and linguistics, see Stalin (1950), Bedford (1985), Bruche-Schulz (1984), Gray (1993), SED (1952), Taylor (1952).

3 See for example the comments by Schwedtke on the turmoil of the early 1930s (1934b: 195).

4 See Masson (1990), Lohmann (1994).

5 A recent play, 'Taking sides', by Ronald Harwood, addresses the question of Furtwängler's role in the war (see Tanner 1995).

6 See Powers (1993).

7 On the jurist Carl Schmitt, see Hufnagel (1988), Noack (1993).

8 Paul de Man's war-time journalism is collected in de Man (1988). For a discussion of the revelations about de Man's anti-Semitic writings, see Norris (1988: 177–98) and J. Hillis Miller (1991: 358–84) and references therein. In these two sources, as in many discussions of this kind, there is an attempt to detach the name of Paul de Man from the label 'Nazi', rather than

any real attempt to understand what Nazi scholarship was. For a careful discussion of de Man in context, see Carroll (1995: 248–61).

- 9 Karl Vossler (1872–1949). On Romance studies in Nazi Germany, see Hausmann (1993).
- 10 Non-Aryans who had served at the front in the First World War were for a time exempt under the so-called *Frontkämpferregelung*.
- 11 For an account of Spitzer's intellectual evolution, see Catano (1988) and the annotated bibliography by Baer and Shenholm (1991).
- 12 Klemperer was married to a non-Jew and survived the war. He subsequently taught in Greifswald, Halle and Berlin. He produced a celebrated critique of Nazi language (Klemperer 1975; Walser 1996).
- 13 Utz Maas' list of linguists and philologists driven into exile or otherwise persecuted or murdered by the Nazis contains 141 names (1992: 480–501). Corrections and additions are given in an appendix (Maas 1992: 502). The only linguist-resister named by Maas is Wolfgang Steinitz (1905–67), a Finno-Ugric specialist and member of the German communist party (KPD).
- 14 On students in Nazi Germany, see Giles (1985) and Grüttner (1995).
- 15 Fehrle joined the NSDAP in 1931. He had been recommended for the post as early as 1933, but did not finally take it up until 1936. Up to 1936 Fehrle was an advisor to the education ministry of Baden (Assion 1994).
- 16 A new book on the co-ordination of Italian universities in 1938 shows how, contrary to received history, 'non-Aryans' were excluded and Italian academics 'rush[ed] to compete for the post vacated by Jewish colleagues'.
- 17 See Burleigh (1988: 191, 253–4).
- 18 On Schwalm, see Chapter 6. Other key figures in the cultural arena in Norway were SS-Sturmabführer Leib of the *Germanische Leitstelle* in Oslo, and Dr Min. Rat Huhnshäuser (see BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001409/ B 295 for extensive documentation).
- 19 See BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001409/ B 295/File I, Teil 1.
- 20 Emmerich (1994: 41) characterizes Wirth as a firm believer in the 'continuity of the early Stone Age religion and world-view' through millennia and the constancy of the 'Atlantic–Arctic Nordic race'. On Wirth, see Häke (1981), Baumann (1995). Häke argues that Wirth's espousal of Bachofen's *Mutterrecht* thesis of primordial matriarchy, brought him into conflict with the Ahnenerbe.
- 21 Weigel was never fully accepted by the academic establishment during the war, and was eventually dismissed by the Ahnenerbe. His archive collection remains at the University of Göttingen (Brednich 1994: 102ff.).
- 22 Medical experiments at Dachau performed by Professor Klaus Schilling, Professor Carl Clauberg and Dr Sigmund Rascher were carried out under Himmler's patronage; Rascher was a member of the Ahnenerbe with the rank of Untersturmführer in the SS (Padfield 1990: 374–7). Funding for its activities came from 'donations solicited by [Karl] Wolff from the *Freundeskreis* of industrial backers' (Padfield 1990: 171). For a recent account of biological research carried out by the Ahnenerbe, see Deichmann (1995: 224–37).
- 23 For a description of the Ahnenerbe and of the role of Wüst, see Simon (1985 b).
- 24 Wüst was also one of the editors of the journal for *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* (with Heinrich Harmjan, also of the Ahnenerbe), was acting editor of *Wörter und Sachen*, and also one of the editors of the Ahnenerbe publication *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft*

in Wien. The *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, the *Materialien zur Urgeschichte der Ostmark*, the *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* (edited by Heinrich Harmjan and E. Röhr) and the *Zeitschrift der Prähistorischen Gesellschaft* (Wien) were also published by the Ahnenerbe foundation.

- 25 In 1944 Harmjan was convicted by the SS of plagiarism in connection with his Habilitation and dismissed from all his official posts (Rammstedt 1986: 103).
- 26 See also Lixfeld (1994: 45–6).
- 27 BDC Reichsth. i. Bayern 8230008544/ A0733.
- 28 See Devoto (1968) for an account of the intellectual links between Vossler and Croce.
- 29 Gerhard Rohlfs succeeded Karl Vossler as Professor of Romance Philology at the University of Munich, but was himself suspended for a time during the Nazi period. Rohlfs was an opponent of idealism in linguistics, and ‘his work on Italian and Gascon dialects cultivated in him a strongly positivist academic outlook’ (Posner 1980: 469–70). Rohlfs edited the *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen* from 1931 to 1954.
- 30 Gamillscheg (1887–1971), Romanist at the University of Berlin, was the author of a three-volume work *Romania Germanica* (1934–6). For an ideological critique of this work, see Hausmann (1993: 123, 123n) and Kramer (1988). Gamillscheg was, with Emil Winkler, editor of the *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur*.
- 31 ‘Der Führer hat mit Erlass vom 25. Mai 1944 die Genehmigung zur Annahme des Ihnen verliehenen Komturkreuzes des Spanischen Ordens Alfons X. des Waisen erteilt’ (BDC RKK 2101 Box 1326 File 18).
- 32 BDC RKK 2101 Box 1326 File 18.
- 33 IfZg/Yivo MA 116/16. Vossler was a member of the Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland and a member of the senate as well as the deputy-head of the section for German–Romance relations (Deutsch–romanische Beziehungen) of the Deutsche Akademie (BDC WI 8200003283).
- 34 Wüst brought in Vossler to evaluate Georg Schmidt-Rohr’s (unsuccessful) Habilitation in 1943 (Maas 1992: 502). For further details of Schmidt-Rohr’s attempt, see Simon (1985a: 383–5). For further discussion of Vossler, see Ahlzweig (1994: 179–82).
- 35 For a selection of Schwietering’s writings, see Ohly and Wehrli (1969).
- 36 However the National Socialist era was not one of pure reaction within Germany, as social–historical accounts have emphasized in the last decades. This also applied within the universities, where processes of modernization and professionalization continued to some degree. Geuter (1984) argues that the discipline of psychology made many institutional gains, and that its position was consolidated with the German university system under National Socialist rule.
- 37 Materials on Vasmer and Schwietering are from IfZg/Yivo MA 116/15, 116/16).
- 38 Koch, born 21 March 1888, an Austrian by birth, taught at the University of Vienna before his appointment as Ordinarius in Berlin in 1935. He was Hauptlektor with the Rosenberg Bureau (Lerchenmüller and Simon 1997: 19–20, 28).
- 39 This may be Dr Peter von Werder.
- 40 For a sketch of the evolution of the *Germanisches Seminar* in Berlin, see Höppner (1993). For a discussion of the continuities and discontinuities in German literary theory in this period, see Vosskamp (1985). For a portrait of Petersen and the literary–academic politics of the late 1930s, see Boden (1994).

- 41 Appointed in 1940. Pyritz (1905–58) was a scholar of the seventeenth century lyricist Paul Fleming and of Goethe.
- 42 Schwietering had been appointed in 1938. A further appointment in Germanic philology made in this period was that of the mediaevalist Ulrich Pretzel in 1941.
- 43 The reference is to Gerhard Cordes (1908–87). Cordes was a product of the Hamburg seminar in Low German language and literature led by Conrad Borchling. He was appointed in Berlin in 1942, but never properly took up the post (which included leadership of a Low German department) because he was involved in propaganda duties in Flanders. After the war Cordes was classified as ‘belastet’, and not immediately reappointed. Cordes was a member of the NSDAP, one of those who joined the party ‘more or less out of bureaucratic necessity as they made their way up the career ladder’. A 1937 law regulating the Habilitation made party membership criterial for getting authorization to teach in a university (Maas 1994: 268, 271–3, 274).
- 44 Grapow was appointed in 1928. The acknowledgements to Alan Gardiner’s *The theory of speech and language* (1932) record the ‘valuable encouragement’ he received from his friend and fellow Egyptologist Professor H. Grapow.
- 45 Max Vasmer (1886–1962).
- 46 Hoppe was rector from 1939 to 1941.
- 47 See Fricke *et al.* (1941) in the bibliography.
- 48 The philosopher Georg Misch (1878–1965), student and son-in-law of Wilhelm Dilthey, was forced to retire in 1935 from his post at Göttingen University. He emigrated to Britain in 1939 (Leaman 1993: 66), but resumed his career in Göttingen in 1946.
- 49 See Boden (1995: 374).
- 50 See BA R 21 Anh 10033. I am very grateful to Gerd Simon for informing me of the existence of this file and for allowing me to work from his copy. See Chapter 8 for discussion of Brinkmann’s writings. Hennig Brinkmann (born 29 August 1901) taught at the universities of Jena, Berlin, Frankfurt (ordentlicher Professor 1938), Istanbul (1943) and Zagreb, Croatia (1944). He became professor at Münster after the war. Brinkmann joined the SA on 20 June 1933 and the NSDAP on 1 May 1937 (BDC SA 0119180230).
- 51 The Ministry of Education also had a special plan for the University of Frankfurt, that of collecting problematic scholars together with the aim of subsequently closing the university down. Brinkmann may or may not have been aware of this (Lerchenmüller and Simon 1997: 21).
- 52 While Scuria was in charge of many of the details of Brinkmann’s stay in Istanbul, the agency to which Brinkmann was primarily answerable was the Foreign Ministry.
- 53 The literary critic and philologist Erich Auerbach (1892–1957) took his Promotion at the University of Greifswald in 1921, taught at the University of Marburg from 1927 until his dismissal at the end of 1935 on racial grounds. He taught at the University of Istanbul, then after the war at Yale University (1950). For discussion and further references, see Gumbrecht (1996). Wilhelm Peters (1880–1963) was a psychologist who had been dismissed from the University of Jena in 1933 on account of a 1932 lecture entitled ‘Nazism as a psychic mass epidemic’. He taught in Istanbul from 1937–52.
- 54 ‘Sie [German courses] werden also dem Einfluss des Juden Auerbachs entzogen sein’.
- 55 Letter dated 10 June 1943. It was felt that the establishment of a Deutsches Wissenschaftliches Institut in Turkey was politically inappropriate.

- 56 Letter to Scurla, 22 November 1943. Later Brinkmann reported that one of the teachers, an ex-communist, could perhaps be won over (report to the Foreign Ministry, 20 May 1944).
- 57 Report to Scurla, 3 January 1944.
- 58 Letter to Scurla, 19 May 1944.
- 59 Report to the Foreign Ministry, 20 May 1944.
- 60 The Society for the Protection of Science and Learning, based in London, was responsible for placing some 200 German scholars and artists in exile in institutions in Turkey.
- 61 The report itself is not in the file.
- 62 The social scientist and media (newspaper) specialist had a complex career in the Nazi Party (joined in March 1930) and the security services. The relevant post in this context is Six's position as head of the 'cultural-political department' of the Foreign Ministry (see Lerchenmüller and Simon 1997: 39–40).
- 63 In April 1944 Turkey acceded to Allied pressure and cut off delivery of supplies to Germany. Turkey broke off diplomatic relations with Germany on 2 August 1944 and on 1 March 1945 declared war on Germany and Japan.
- 64 Letter from the Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP to the Ministry of Education, dated 25 July 1944. The Turan (an Iranian geographical term) Association was a movement that arose in Hungary in 1839. Its aim was to unite Turkish speakers with Finns, Hungarians and Mongolians on the basis of their alleged linguistic kinship. However, '[a]lthough the terms Turan and pan-Turanianism remained in occasional use, the movement was in effect pan-Turkish, for the Muslim Turkish peoples, in Turkey and Central Asia, showed little interest in their putative Christian or pagan brothers in Hungary or Mongolia'. Turan was the pseudonym of Hüseyinzade Ali (1864–1941), one of many Turkists from Russia active in pan-Turkish movements (see Lewis 1961: 341–3).
- 65 Brinkmann asked that this report be forwarded to Scurla at the Foreign Ministry, the Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP, the Reichsdozentenführung and the Amt Wissenschaft in Munich.
- 66 The full title was 'Von dreifachen Vertrauen – Grundformen menschlichen Verhaltens in der Dichtung'. Details of the lecture are given in a report from the Deutsches Wissenschaftliches Institut in Zagreb to the Foreign Ministry, dated 23 January.
- 67 1890–1972. The folklorist and dialectologist Adolf Bach taught at Pädagogische Akademie in Bonn from 1927–32, then at the Hochschule für Lehrerbildung in Bonn from 1933. He taught at the University of Bonn from 1927–41, and was director of the Abteilung für Rheinische Mundartforschung und Volkskunde am Institut für Geschichtliche Landeskunde there. In 1941 Bach went to the newly founded University of Strassburg where he eventually was made Ordinarius. After the arrival of Allied troops in Strassburg in November 1944 he went to the University of Göttingen. Bach was admitted to the NSDAP on 1 May 1933, and was *Leiter der Abteilung für Deutschkunde* in the Bonn branch of the Nazi Teachers' Union (NSLB). For full biographical details, see Hesse (1995: 148–9).
- 68 This department was part of the Institut für Geschichtliche Landeskunde der Rheinlande.
- 69 Quoted in the *Munzinger-Archiv/Internat. Biograph. Archiv* entry on Bach.
- 70 The references are to Freundenthal (1955) and the third edition (1960) of Bach's *Deutsche Volkskunde*, originally published in 1937. Freundenthal was, like Bach, a member of the NSDAP (as of 1 May 1933, no. 2731981, see Lixfeld 1994: 98, 247).

- 71 See Powers (1993) for an account of the Heisenberg's moral tight-rope walk. Gitta Sereny argues that Powers wrongly accepted claims made by Heisenberg, in particular a claim to the effect that Heisenberg deliberately asked for low levels of funding. Sereny bases this conclusion on writings produced by Albert Speer in Spandau Prison. Speer wrote: 'I do hope Heisenberg is not now claiming that they tried, for reasons of principle, to sabotage the project by asking for such minimal support' (Sereny 1996b: 319). For a selection of primary sources on physics in this period, see Hentschel (1996).
- 72 IfZg/Yivo MA 116/2.
- 73 For extensive discussion, see Lixfeld (1994).
- 74 For a survey of Strobel's career, see Lixfeld (1994: 125–7). Strobel (born 1911) studied under Friedrich Maurer at Erlangen University. He joined the NSDAP on 1 December 1930, and the SS on 1 November 1931. Lixfeld sums up Strobel's approach to folklore as follows:

The emphasis on world-view and scholarly work by the political multi-functionary and folklorist Strobel lay in the areas of Germanic racial and peasant custom research and its application for National Socialist festival and celebration planning. He followed the ideological and methodological prescriptions of the Rosenbergian *Mythus*, the Viennese Mythological School, and the folklore theory of Ziegler.

(1994: 126)
- On Maurer, who was likewise a member of the NSDAP (no. 5060645, joined 1 May 1937), see Hermann (1991: 129–33).
- 75 Ruprecht (Salzburg) was proposed for the position of the director of the Research Post for Peasant Life Structures (Forschungsstelle Bäuerlicher Lebensformen) of the Institute for German Folklore (Institut für deutsche Volkskunde) of Rosenberg's Advanced School (Hohe Schule der NSDAP). See the 1944 document in Lixfeld (1994: 176–7), from BA File NS 15/102.
- 76 Simon notes that Naumann's theories were widely attacked in Nazi Germany and Naumann was eventually denied the right to teach, though Naumann himself sought to demonstrate his loyalty to National Socialism. Naumann appeared as a pro-Nazi polemicist in his attack on Ernst Robert Curtius in 1932, but as rector of the University of Bonn he sought to defend his colleague Karl Barth. He was replaced as rector in February 1935 (Lerchenmüller and Simon 1997: 14). Naumann's theory of an upper stratum and a lower stratum seemed to put in question the unity of the German people (Simon 1985b: 111). It also suggested parallels between German peasants and 'primitives' (Simon 1985b: 111). On the reception of Naumann's thought under National Socialism, see also Emmerich (1968: 258–67).
- 77 Ruprecht implies that Bach's discussion of race is an attempt to adapt himself to National Socialism. In fact, discussion of the issue of race remained a feature of Bach's work after 1945 (see, for example, the third edition of Bach's *Deutsche Volkskunde* (1960)).
- 78 'Ein Bemühen Bachs um Ausrichtung im nationalsozialistischen Sinne wird allerdings in seinem erstgenannten Buch festgestellt'.
- 79 'Man könne mit ihm klar, beinahe militärisch arbeiten'.
- 80 An organization representing ex-servicemen. It merged with the Reichskriegerverband to form the Deutscher Reichskriegerbund Kyffhäuser in 1921.

- 81 For Bach's account of folklore under National Socialism, see the third edition of Bach's *Deutsche Volkskunde* (1960: 89–108).
- 82 The quotation continues:

While there was almost no 'resistance', there was much willing legitimization of the *status quo* as the fulfilment of the past, or provision of a scientific basis for government policy in the occupied East. While it is doubtful whether any of the scholars considered here influenced major geopolitical decisions, ethnic-political policy was another matter. That is why, despite the exigencies of wartime, the subject [*Ostforschung*] enjoyed continuous institutional expansion, generous funding, and the large scale exemption of its personnel. Exponents of the view that academics were without influence have to explain why hardheaded SS managers thought and acted otherwise.

(1988: 9–10)

4 ETYMOLOGY AS COLLECTIVE THERAPY: JOST TRIER'S LEAP OF FAITH

- 1 Jost Trier (born 15 August 1894, died 1970). Trier taught at the University of Marburg, then at Münster from 1932. Trier was admitted into the NSDAP on 1 May 1933, party no. 2494645. For discussion of word-field theory and Trier's work, see Seiffert (1968), Geckeler (1971). A short correspondence between Trier and the Ahnenerbe (I.O. Plassmann) shows him anxious to forge a relationship. He wrote (5 March 1939) recommending *cand. phil.* Wilhelm Schmülling to the Ahnenerbe as a potential junior academic employee. Trier was also labouring under the misapprehension that the Ahnenerbe wanted him to hold a lecture. A letter from Plassmann to Trier, dated 8 March 1939, politely pointed out the error, but suggested that Trier might speak on another occasion (BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001559/B 0307). However Plassmann and the Ahnenerbe were in fact far from enthusiastic about Trier (Gerd Simon, personal communication).
- 2 The word 'Hegung' and the verb 'hegen' have a range of meanings. The *Brockhaus Encyclopedia* (1968) defines the noun as 'das feierliche Friedensgebot bei Volks- und Gerichtsversammlungen'. The *Hegung* is thus an order for a ritual silence, particularly in the context of a meeting of the *Ding* or *Thing*. *Hegen* the verb in modern German has the meaning of the taking care or the cultivation of a skill or activity (especially in the idiom *hegen und pflegen* meaning 'to look after conscientiously'), as well as the nursing or raising of grudges or doubts. However it is now rarely used, except in the language of hunters (Gerd Simon, personal communication).
- 3 On the notion of 'inner form' in Marty's work, see Kiesow (1990).
- 4 Simon (1985b) surveys the background to the trends found within linguistics in Nazi Germany; the background to Trier's generation of semanticists is also surveyed in Maas (1988a) and Nehrlich (1992). On structuralism in Germany, see Stempel (1978).
- 5 These two different questions were also discussed in Trier (1931c: 24).
- 6 17 June 1938. The lecture begins: 'Gauleiter – Magnifizenz – meine Damen und Herren!' This lecture was first published in *Die Welt als Geschichte*, volume 4, 347–57 (1938). I am quoting here from the 1939 version, described in Dorothea Ader's bibliography of Trier's writings (1964: 493) as a having been distorted or misrepresented ('entstellt').
- 7 It should be stressed that Trier's work was – with one important exception (Trier 1939) –

directed to a narrow scholarly audience, and that Trier was not a prominent Nazi activist. His world is very much a private world of reflection. This ‘therapy’ is thus operating on a rarified level, and did not have any direct links to political practice.

5 THE STRANGE CASE OF SONDERFÜHRER WEISGERBER

- 1 Leo Weisgerber (1899–1985). Born in Metz. Studied in Bonn, Munich and Leipzig, and studied with the Romance scholar Meyer-Lübke, the Celticist Rudolf Thurneysen and the Indo-Europeanist F. Sommer. Promotion 1923 in Celtic studies, Habilitation, *Sprache als Erkenntnisform* 1925, Bonner Pädagogische Akademie 1926–7. In 1927 he joined the University of Rostock as Professor für vergleichende Sprachwissenschaft und Sanskrit, 1938 became Professor für allgemeine und indogermanische Sprachwissenschaft in Marburg. Weisgerber joined the university teacher’s section of the NSLB in 1934 (membership no. 310225), but was not a member of the NSDAP. From 1942 he was Professor für allgemeine und indogermanische Sprachwissenschaft in Bonn, where he built up the *Seminar für allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft und Keltologie* and, with Professor G. Deeters, formed the Sprachwissenschaftliches Institut. In the late 1950s and early 1960s Weisgerber was a leading member of the scholarly group around the journal *Sprachforum: Zeitschrift für angewandte Sprachwissenschaft*, edited by Günther Kandler of the University of Bonn. Other scholars in this group included Gerhard Deeters from Bonn, Friedrich Kainz of Vienna and Johannes Knobloch of the *Sprachwissenschaftliches Seminar* of Innsbruck University. In a tribute to Weisgerber delivered in 1959 Kandler explicitly linked Weisgerber’s role in *Sprachforum* to his editorial work with the journal *Wörter und Sachen* (1959/60: 169). For a critical analysis of Weisgerber’s use of Humboldt, see Ivo (1994).
- 2 What is unclear in this is the role of ‘folk etymology’.
- 3 For discussion of these linguists, see Nehrlich (1992).
- 4 For a distinction between ‘natural’ and ‘artificial’ bilingualism, see von Weiss (1937). For a discussion of the contradiction between ideas of organic integration and bilingualism in the context of Weisgerber’s birthplace (Metz), see Ittenbach (1937).
- 5 ‘Muttersprache ist für jeden Menschen die Sprache seiner Sprachgemeinschaft.’
- 6 ‘das natürliche Recht der Sprachgemeinschaft auch auf volklichen Zusammenschluss’.
- 7 On Günther, see Chapter 8.
- 8 See discussion in Ahlzweig (1994: 194–6).
- 9 For a summary of Weisgerber’s views on the origins of *deutsch*, see Poliakov (1974: 73).
- 10 There is a vast literature on Germans and Celts within the history of European linguistics which cannot be reviewed here. Key texts include Feist (1927), Neckel (1929) and Elston (1934).
- 11 This statement was printed inside the front cover of the books in the series. Volume 10 was a bibliography of the writings of Rudolf Thurneysen compiled by A. Heiermeier, Niemeyer: Halle, 1942, edited by Ludwig Mühlhausen.
- 12 Adolf Mahr was the director of the Irish National Museum in Dublin.
- 13 For a brief history of the society, see the notice in *Zeitschrift für Keltische Studien und Volksforschung*, volume 22, pp. 440–1.
- 14 ‘Vergewaltigte Kelten’. Both these references are drawn from review of the literature on Celtic subjects (*Zeitschrift für keltische Philologie und Volksforschung* 23: 206–46). The full reference

for the naval propaganda work runs as follows: 'Die Bretagne. Ein Buch für die deutsche Kriegsmarine. Im Auftrag des Kommandanten der Seeverteidigung Bretagne herausgegeben von der Marine-Propaganda-Abteilung-West, 5 M.-K.-B.-H.-Kompanie. (o.O.) 1941. (Nicht im Buchhandel), 80 S.'

- 15 Born 16 December 1888 in Kassel.
- 16 I obtained a copy of this important book after I had completed my own study. Rather than seek to integrate the immense amount of information contained in Lerchenmüller's study into my own already overlong typescript I think it simpler to refer the reader to it directly.
- 17 The date of entry into the Party is given as both 1 April 1932 and 1 May 1932 (membership number 1 153 327). Mühlhausen joined the SA on 1 February 1933 (BDC SSO 6400030289), becoming SA-Stürmführer on 15 March 1937, and was a member of the Führerkorps z. V der SA-Standarte 7. (BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001009).
- 18 BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001009.
- 19 'Deutsche Gesellschaft für Keltische Studien, Mitteilungen an unsere Mitglieder zu Weihnachten, 1941' (BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001009).
- 20 Letter from Mühlhausen to Dr Mentzel, president of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, 1 November 1941 (BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001009).
- 21 Mühlhausen had been appointed to the chair in Celtic studies at the University of Berlin in preference to Leo Weisgerber, who lodged a complaint with the ministry of education over the procedure (Simon and Broderick 1992: 240).
- 22 See also von Tevenar (1936a, 1936b), Singer (1934).
- 23 Soldat Rudolf Schlichting, Feldpost 05073e (BA R 57 DAI 829b). Further materials on Brittany can be found in BA R 57 DAI 829a.
- 24 For a discussion of the two Irish censuses, see von Tevenar (1941c).
- 25 Letters in BA R 57 182–8. Both Hoops and Wernitz were subsequently killed in action. On Kloss' article in *Geopolitik*, see also von Tevenar's brief and mildly critical review where he observes that the respected researcher Heinz Kloss has strayed somewhat from his area of expertise (1943: 401). Tevenar died at Oberschöffolsheim near Strassburg on 15 April 1943, at the age of 31.
- 26 'die Schrumpfung der nordischen Substanz der britischen Nation'
- 27 On Neil Gunn, see also the notice by von Tevenar (1941b: 421–2)
- 28 The previous editor, the Indo-Europeanist Julius Pokorny (1887–1970), ausserordentlicher Professor in Celtic studies at the University of Berlin, had been obliged to retire from his academic post in 1935, and emigrated to Switzerland. Pokorny was technically editor from 1933 to 1940, with the assistance of Rudolf Thurneysen from volumes 20–1 (i.e. 1939–40). For a criticism of Pokorny's writings, see Römer (1985: 82). Thurneysen died in 1940.
- 29 In the 1944 personnel list of the Ahnenerbe Dr Huth was listed as an adjunct professor at the University of Strassburg, currently serving in the Waffen-SS (document translated in Lixfeld 1994: 194–200, from BA NS 19/1850).
- 30 In this same letter Huth described Mühlhausen as being somewhat sceptical of *Symbolforschung*, though respectful of its aims (BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001009).
- 31 Letter from Sievers to Werner Best, dated 16 October 1942, (BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001009). The chair was never actually established (Gerd Simon, personal communication).
- 32 Letter from Mühlhausen to Sievers dated 14 April 1943. See also Kater (1974: 196, 286).

- 33 'Aufzeichnung über den Aufgabenkreis einer Abteilung für Keltische Volksforschung im "Ahnenerbe"', (BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001009).
- 34 BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001009.
- 35 BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001009.
- 36 Mühlhausen apparently made the request that he be allowed to become an SS-Führer-Bewerber, but Sievers, writing to Himmler's office (letter dated 2 November 1943), argued that he was already too old and that he should serve as a Fachleiter (BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001009).
- 37 BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001009. There is also an earlier letter in the file from Sievers' office to von Tevenar suggesting Mühlhausen as the leader of a study trip to Brittany (16 January 1943).
- 38 'Der Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD im Bereich des Militärbefehlshabers in Frankreich.'
- 39 BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001009.
- 40 BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001009.
- 41 Kriek (1938: 3): 'Das nationalsozialistische Welt- und Menschenbild findet seine Erfüllung im Geschichtsbild. Die geschichtliche Mission des Volkes ist Ausdruck seiner Rasse, und von dieser Aufgabe her werden Politik, Recht, Wirtschaft, Kunst, Erziehung, und Wissenschaft bestimmt'; Stroh (1939a: 133): 'ein geprägtes völkisches Weltbild'.
- 42 This book is, however, also very difficult to find. In any case one can find cases of Jewish authors cited in the academic journals. Rudolf Münch for example discussed the ideas of Husserl (Münch 1942).
- 43 On this point, Simon (1982) points to two places in Weisgerber's work where he uses the word *völkisch* (Weisgerber 1940c: 44, 1941: 36). This was in addition to the 1936 article 'Die Muttersprache als völkische Schicksalsmacht' published in *Die Westmark*. Dutz reports that this was an amendment by the editor (Dutz 1984: 45).
- 44 The report for example mentions Weisgerber's role in supporting the Catholic community after the trial of the priest Leffer in April 1935 (BDC WI 8200003382 A 542).
- 45 Sievers had sent a letter (dated 6 July 1938) to Himmler's office in Berlin reporting that Weisgerber (by then professor in Marburg) was to be brought into co-operation with the Ahnenerbe, and asking the Sicherheitshauptamt (Stabkanzlei-Auskunftsstelle) for a report. The text of the reply was dated 4 November 1938 (BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001649 B 310).
- 46 Discussion of 7 July 1940, report dated 8 July 1940: A further complaint was made by Huntziger on 19 July 1940 about contacts between the German 5th Panzer Division and Breton autonomists. The report (dated 20 July) comments laconically that the complaint was incorrect, at least in respect of the 5th Panzer Division. French National Archive AJ 40 1367 (File 43).
- 47 For an account of German propaganda in occupied France, see Umbreit (1968: 150–70). Umbreit also gives a summary of Weisgerber's 'unobtrusive' cultural activities (1968: 162).
- 48 The German ambassador to France, Abetz, who was appointed in July 1940, had among his duties those of advising the military authorities on political matters, and the political direction of the press, radio and propaganda in the occupied territories, and the influencing of the media in the unoccupied part of France (see material in French National Archive AJ 40 1367).
- 49 Gruppenbefehl 106 from Stoffregen and Weisgerber's report are in the Militärarchiv, Freiburg, Akte RW 35/217 (75521/1), pp. 152–5 and 201–6 (Simon 1982: 41). The text is reprinted in Simon 1982: 47–50.
- 50 On Hémon, *Gwalarn* and Breton cultural activism, see von Tevenar 1941a.

- 51 Volume 23, p. 247. A notice by Gerhard von Tevenar reporting the founding of the *Framm Keltiek Breizh* in Rennes was published in volume 22 of the *Zeitschrift für Keltische Philologie und Volksforschung*, p. 443.
- 52 For a brief biography of Epting, see Laitenberger (1976: 129n). The institute published a series of pamphlets, the *Cahiers de l'Institut Allemand* (Sorlot: Paris) The second volume included a contribution by Hans Georg Gadamer entitled 'Herder et l'histoire' (pp. 9–36); the fourth a piece by Eugen Fischer, 'Le problème de la race at la législation raciale allemande' (pp. 83–110) in which he argues that race is a totality which embraces all aspects of the human being, both mental and physical (p. 83). He also argues that we cannot translate the word 'esprit' by 'Geist' (p. 103). These and other propaganda materials can be found in the French National Archives, Paris, file nos. AJ 40 1595 363–6.
- 53 Majestic Archives: Vn. 133/I/30–42
- 54 Weisgerber had used his good offices to promote the career of Yann Fouéré as a Breton cultural activist, see Fréville (1979: 66–7).
- 55 See for example Weisgerber's remarks on 'Blut und Boden' in Weisgerber (1934).
- 56 'ein wissenschaftlich reaktionärer Exponent der Weisgerber-Linguistik'; see Dammann *et al.* 1970, 1971; Jäger 1970, 1971; Gipper 1971; Hellmann 1971; Hölker 1971; Leuninger and Pfeffer 1971; [Linguistische Berichte] 1971; von Stechow 1970, 1971; Weisgerber 1971c; Wetz 1970.
- 57 To be fair, it should be pointed out that Weisgerber's name is not mentioned in the second article by Stroh. However the point being made here is not that there were no political and academic disagreements between Weisgerber and other linguists, but rather that the linguistics of mother-tongue in its various forms was not clearly distinct from ideas about race. The disciplinary rivalry with ethnology and *Rassenkunde* is another matter, one which needs to be researched fully and read in conjunction with the history of nineteenth and early twentieth century linguistics (see for example Porzig 1924: 222).

6 'A COMPLICATED YOUNG MAN WITH A COMPLICATED FATE, IN A COMPLICATED TIME': HEINZ KLOSS AND THE ETHNIC MISSIONARIES OF THE THIRD REICH

- 1 Kloss ([1937] 1980: 51) writes:

The Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland, Berlin, while taking deep interest in things German-American, restricts itself to practical work. What little research work is done by or in connection with it, will be found in its magazine 'Deutsche Arbeit', Berlin. Dr Norbert Zimmer is its consultant for North America.

- 2 Stuttgart was declared 'Stadt der Auslandsdeutschen' by Hitler in 1936.
- 3 Other organizations named by Kloss ([1937] 1980: 51): 'The Forschungsinstitut für das Überseedeschtum (headed by Professor Rein and connected with the University of Hamburg), fosters graduate studies in the field of German emigration to countries overseas. The Institut für Auslandsdeutschtum conducted by Professor Mannhardt in Marburg and connected with the

local university, also devotes particular attention to the non-European countries which Professor Mannhardt himself has visited several times. [. . .] The Deutsche Arbeitsfront cooperates with the Deutsche Berufsgemeinschaft, a national organization of German-Americans which fosters occupational and recreational activities. A number of sectarian organizations in Germany have links with corresponding GA bodies [. . .].’

- 4 The Gustav-Adolf-Verein was a church organization based in Leipzig. It had links with the United Lutheran Church and the Evangelical and Reformed Church in the United States (Kloss [1937] 1980: 53).
- 5 For a succinct summary of the history of VOMI, see the introduction to the relevant *Bundesarchiv* catalogue (BA R 59) and Burleigh 1988: 161–3. Further references are given in Burleigh 1988: 163, footnote 21.
- 6 ‘Die neuen Ostgebiete des Reiches sollen in ähnlicher Weise völkisch und staatlich für unser Reich und Volk gewonnen werden, wie das im Mittelalter mit Mecklenburg und Brandenburg, Pommern und Schlesien geschah.’
- 7 Born 16 August 1900 in Bremen. Ordentlicher Professor and Director of the Volkspolitisches Institut at the University of Posen. He held the rank of SS-Hauptsturmführer.
- 8 For discussion of this operation, see Oesterle (1994: 228–34), Lerchenmüller and Simon (1997: 61).
- 9 Quoted here from Lixfeld 1994: 191–3, a translation of BA File NS 21/229.
- 10 See summary in Oesterle (1994: 234–6).
- 11 Born 3 May 1897. For a brief biographical sketch, see Lerchenmüller and Simon (1997: 61).
- 12 See BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001409/ B 295/ II/ Part IV.
- 13 Kloss (1941a: 14) places the formation of this settlement in the thirteenth century.
- 14 In any case, as Schwalm reported to Sievers in a letter dated 27 July 1942, those Germans who did not opt to move were being forced out by partisans (BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001409/ B 295/ II/ Part IV). The local German aristocrats, e.g. Graf Logothetti, were reluctant to abandon their ancestral homes. However their castles were eventually looted by partisans (letter from Sievers to Himmler, 24 June 1942).
- 15 Letter from Schwalm to Sievers, dated 11 November 1941, complaining about logistical and personnel problems (BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001409 B 295/II/Teil VII).
- 16 See BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001409/ B-295/ II/ Teil IV. The document has no author’s name, but is by Schwalm.
- 17 Two (undated and anonymous) reports are to be found in BA NS 21/800, the third, ‘Lagebericht’, is in BA NS 21/820. In a letter from Lampeter to Schwalm dated 22 February 1942 (BA NS 21/ 820) Lampeter speaks of three reports which he is enclosing, including the ‘Lagebericht vom 17.2.42’ which is intended for the SD, the Sicherheitsdienst. I am very grateful to Gerd Simon for drawing my attention to these reports and for providing me with a copy of both the reports and the letter.
- 18 ‘Lagebericht’, dated 17 February 1942.
- 19 Born 30 October 1904 in Halle, died Gross-Gerau, 13 June 1987. Kloss studied political economy at the University of Halle (*Diplom-Volkswirtschaft*, 1926), and joined the German Foreign Institute in Stuttgart (Deutsches Ausland-Institut, DAI) as an *Assistent* in 1929, becoming department head in 1932. He achieved his Promotion at the University of Innsbruck in 1939. The Bundesarchiv-Zehlendorf (formerly BDC) has Kloss’ file cams from the Ministry of

- Education and the Deutsche Akademie (Amerika-Ausschuss).
- 20 *Abstand* concerns the degree to which the variety in question differs from a related variety; *Ausbau*, its stage of development into 'a standardized tool of literary expression' in fiction and non-fiction (Kloss 1969; Joseph 1980).
 - 21 The *Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen* in Stuttgart (the successor institute to the DAI) has a typescript by Kloss on German assimilation in the United States dated 1928 (Ms 14, 89 pages).
 - 22 I must stress that there is a vast amount of material on the DAI in the Bundesarchiv, and that Kloss was a prolific writer. A full treatment of his career would require a substantial book.
 - 23 Wertheimer was of Jewish origin, though a Protestant by religion. On Wertheimer, see Diamond (1974: 43–9) and Ritter (1976: 35–6).
 - 24 For an account of the background, origins and history of the DAI, see Ritter (1976).
 - 25 Csaki's family was from Siebenburgen, and he had studied Germanistik in Germany before completing his Promotion in Klausenburg with a dissertation in Hungarian.
 - 26 BA R57 Reisebericht Dr Kloss (20 March 1940 to 1 April 1940), Appendix C. The context was the possibility of the DA supplying a lector to the Institut für Heimatforschung in Käsmark, Slovakia. For discussion of this institute, see section on Franz Beranek (Chapter 8).
 - 27 In a footnote to this, Smith adds that Kloss was the author of a plan to transfer American prisoners of war who were of German descent into separate camps in order to lay the groundwork for the development of a sympathetic cadre to return the United States after Germany had won the war (German records, Alexandria, Virginia 21/412/5157276–5157280).
 - 28 This document, entitled 'S.A. Diamonds surrealistisches Gemälde der Deutschamerika-Forschung im Dritten Reich', can be read at the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, in Munich (Z[eugen]S[chriftum] 3087). There also exists a document entitled 'Die Amerikaarbeit des DAI im Dritten Reich: ein Stück fahrlässiger Geschichtsschreibung' written around 1966 mentioned by Ritter (1976: 5, footnote 16) which expands on Kloss' review of Smith. I haven't yet located a copy of this.
 - 29 Gerd Simon informs me that there was a 'War-effort of American studies' (*Kriegseinsatz der Amerikanistik*) within the *Kriegseinsatz der Geisteswissenschaften* (personal communication).
 - 30 BA R 57 Neu 912.
 - 31 F. Gissibl, Reichspropagandaamt. Other guests included Dr Stahmer of the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle, von Feldmann of the Propaganda Ministry, Dr Emil Meynen, Volksdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaften, Berlin, Ernst Vennekohl, VDA, Professor Rein, Universität für Kolonial- u. Überseegeschichte, Hamburg, Dr F. Braun, Mittelstelle Landsleute drinnen und draussen, Kaiserslautern.
 - 32 By this rather coy phrase Kloss presumably means the National Socialist view of the *Volk* in the context of German-American relations.
 - 33 Götz was the head of the Forschungsstelle Schwaben im Ausland which was attached to the DAI.
 - 34 See discussion on Kloss and Ross below.
 - 35 Hans Joachim Beyer, born 1908. Beyer was an important theorist of *Umvolkung*, the study of the causes, conditions and nature of ethnic transformations, and discontinuities and continuities of racial identity (Beyer 1937). According to Ritter (1974: 85–91) Beyer was put in charge of a liaison office for overseas German folk research (Mittelstelle für auslandsdeutsche Volksforschung) in 1937. For publications, see Beyer (1935, 1943). Beyer was the editor of *Volksforschung* until 1939. Both these roles were later performed by Kloss.
 - 36 This memorandum was by Kloss, and is listed in his publications with the dateline Stuttgart,

1940 (*Europa Ethnica* 27: 53).

- 37 In fact an entire volume of the BA catalogue (BA R 59) is devoted to the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle*.
- 38 The full title is *Volk und Raum. Ein Buch vom Überseedeutschtum* (1930), 254 typewritten pages. This is entry 77b in Kloss' bibliography (*Europa Ethnica* 27: 56).
- 39 I cannot pretend any particular insight into Kloss' inner life during the Nazi period, and do not know what – if any – value can be attached to the claims made here by Kloss.
- 40 Heinz Kloss (1942?): 'Volkstums- und Rassenfragen der Vereinigten Staaten', with amendments and additions, 197 typed pages can be found in BA R 57 407.
- 41 BA R 57 71.
- 42 BA R 57 71.
- 43 'Über Möglichkeiten weltanschaulicher Werbung bei den Angelsachsen, besonders bei den Angloamerikanern' (no date), BA R 57 71.
- 44 BA R 57 182/2. Pfeffer (born 1906) was the author of a number of National Socialist tracts, including 'The English war – a Jewish war' (1943). Pfeffer taught sociology at the University of Leipzig; in 1940 he became professor in Berlin, then in 1943 Ordinarius (Professor für Volks- und Landeskunde Grossbritanniens und des Weltreiches). He was also a member of the Institut für die Geschichte des neuen Deutschland (Rammstedt 1986: 104).
- 45 'Der Ansatz zu freibäuerlicher Demokratie wurde kapitalistisch verfälscht'.
- 46 BA R 57 1284.
- 47 North Schleswig had been part of Germany before the First World War, and had been regained by Denmark in a plebiscite in 1920. According to Kloss (1941a: 5) 40,000 *Volksdeutsche* rejoined the Reich when North Schleswig was annexed in 1940. Kärnten was a Gau in the German Reich between 1938 and 1945, and is today in southern Austria.
- 48 The first in the series was Heinz Oskar's Schaefer's *Grundzüge der nationalsozialistischen Weltanschauung* (1935).
- 49 This idea had been discussed earlier in Kloss' account of Germans in Australia (Kloss 1936: 459). This article contains an interesting picture of Australian-Germans at a *Volksfest* in Brisbane posing under the swastika.
- 50 'In Deutschland selber blieb das Volk ohne Raum, draussen in den weiten Umwelt-Räumen aber ward es Volk ohne Reich'. *Volk ohne Raum* was the title of a work by Hans Grimm (1926). Kloss praises Grimm's work as an example of the enrichment of German culture that the experiences of the *Volksdeutsche* have contributed (1941a: 24).
- 51 It is possible (though Kloss himself does not provide any evidence for this) that the theosophical mysticism of *Wort und Zahl* caused some political problems for Kloss, given that Anthroposophy was suppressed in the National Socialist period.
- 52 Biographical information is taken from entries in the Internationales Biographisches Archiv (Munziger-Archiv), the biographical sketch published in *Europa Ethnica* 27: 50, the various editions of *Who's who in Germany*, and the files of DAI.
- 53 Scheerer of the DAI raised the question of whether Kloss' mission to the United States required him to register with the US government. A law of 8 June 1938 laid down that persons employed by agencies to disseminate propaganda in the United States be so registered (BA R 57 71).
- 54 See BA R 57 182–3 for a letter from Dr Rüdiger to the Generalkommando Abw. II Stuttgart dated 24 February 1943 (forwarded 26 February 1943). Kloss was due to go to Paris for a week

in March to gather materials for the investigation of the situation with regard to nationalities in French North Africa, and the French in Canada. The letter asks that Dr Hilde Pichler be allowed to go in his stead.

- 55 BA R57 182–9.
- 56 Germany and Italy declared war on the United States in December 1941.
- 57 Papers pertaining to this matter can be found in BA R57 1222. Manfred Grisebach of the *Hauptabteilung Wanderforschung und Sippenkunde* of the DAI wrote to Kloss on 28 June 1940 asking for a list of people to whom the memorandum had been sent. Dr Josef Scheben of the *Forschungsstelle Düsseldorf* had written a reply to the *Denkschrift*, and Grisebach have both Kloss' memorandum and Scheben's reply withdrawn from circulation. This was due to concerns raised by the Foreign Ministry in relation to the political situation in the United States. A letter from Grisebach to Kloss dated 8 February 1941 concerning a 'Denkschrift zur Frage der Rück siedlung der Überseedutschen' criticized the memorandum for neglecting the work that the DAI has to do abroad, even after the transfer of German populations to the Reich. Those who are left after these transfers must also be catered to. Grisebach notes that Kloss himself points out how few Germans are returning in percentage terms and that the work of the DAI is hardly affected, asking him to include these points in his final version.
- 58 BA R 57 182–2.
- 59 BA R 57 182–8.
- 60 'Nur im Hinblick auf diese Auskunft darf ich auch noch erwähnen, dass ich seit einiger Zeit Pg. bin.' There are also postcards in the file BA R57/182–9 from Felix Kraus (of the journal *Volkstum im Südosten*), postmarked 26 February 1942, 3 March 1942, addressed to 'Pg Dr Kloss'. I must stress that I have not seen a membership file-card or any official documents which confirm this statement. The Bundesarchiv-Zehlendorf informed me that they did not have a party membership file-card. However I see no particular reason to doubt that Kloss did join the NSDAP.
- 61 See for example the letter from Professor H. Steinacker, Rektor of the University of Innsbruck to Rüdiger, dated 11 July 1942 which begins: 'Lieber Pg. Rüdiger' (BA R 57 182–8).
- 62 'Unser Kampfblatt: Philadelphia Deutscher Weckruf und Beobachter' (BA R 57 152).
- 63 See letter to Kloss, 22 February 1938 (BA R 57 152).
- 64 Letters dated 12 April 1941, 6 January 1942, 30 September 1942 (R 57 182–8).
- 65 BA R 57 182–8 Kloss to Tevenar (2 February 1942, 16 October 1942). For further discussion of National Socialism and the Celtic languages, see Chapter 5 .
- 66 See the substantial press cuttings and briefings in BA R 57 858a, 858b.
- 67 BA R 57 182–3 (letter marked confidential).
- 68 BA R 57 182–7.
- 69 Kloss wrote to Dr Mönning in Berlin on 1 December 1941 to thank him for the books, and to say that he was looking forward to seeing some others, including one concerning the 'Jew Deal' (BA R 57 182–6).
- 70 IKloss to Rüdiger, 16 December 1940 (BA R 57 182–8).
- 71 On 20 January 1939 Kloss wrote to Dr Kruse in the DAI bureau in Berlin on the need to defend the *Wochenspiegel* against charges made by the Foreign Ministry (AA) that its production fell outside the purview of the DAI (BA R 57 152). A letter from Dr Rüdiger to Schulrat Professor Dr Kaiser of 6 May 1943 reports that the *Aussendeutscher Wochenspiegel* had ceased publication in the beginning of 1942: 'Die Gründe für die Einstellung des "Wochenspiegels" kann ich Ihnen

- mündlich bei Ihrem Hiersein auseinandersetzen' (BA R 57 DAI 182–5).
- 72 The letter is hand written, and signs off with 'Mit bestem Dank im voraus und Heil Hitler!' (BA R 57 182–9).
- 73 Kruse to Kloss, 19 January 1940; Kloss to Kruse 13 July 1940; Kruse to Kloss 15 July 1940 (BA R 57 152).
- 74 A R 57 344 Reisebericht Dr Kloss 20 March 1940–1 April 1941 also contains the report of a visit by Kloss to Vienna, Pressburg and Käsmark (Slovakia) in 1940. Questions of academic politics and the DAI's rivalry with the Forschungsgemeinschaften dominate the report of Kloss' 1940 trip.
- 75 Sommerfeldt was 'Referent an der Sektion Rassen- und Volkstumsforschung' in the institute. For an important discussion of the background and nature of this institute in Cracow, and further discussion of Sommerfeldt and his writings, see Burleigh (1988: 272–4).
- 76 BA R 57 1224.
- 77 Letter dated 15 December 1941 (BA R 57 182–2).
- 78 'In sachlicher Hinsicht unterstand die Pst. nur dem AA, in disziplinarrechtlicher aber dem Leiter des DAI'.
- 79 Krallert had extensive links with the SS (Gerd Simon, personal communication).
- 80 BA R 57 Reisebericht Dr Kloss 20 March 1940–1 April 1941. The Überseedeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft had been refounded in 1939 and five members of the DAI invited to join: Drascher, Kloss, Kühn, Lohr and Reimann. Dr Meynen had however tried to exclude all DAI personnel from all discussions that involved 'Etatsverhandlungen'. Dr Katharina Reimann took over from Kloss when he was called up for military service (see the letter from Kunze of the Deutsche Akademie to Kloss, 17 March 1943, BA R 57 182–2. It is quite striking how at this stage of the war a number of women came to the fore in the editorial and academic activities around Kloss (Katharina Reimann, Gerda Warnke, Hildegard Pichler, Edith Pütter). Katharina Reimann (born 1907) studied at the University of Breslau (Reimann 1935).
- 81 Haugen subsequently became Professor of Scandinavian Language and Linguistics at Harvard University.
- 82 The introduction states that the work was completed by Dr Hildegard Pichler after Kloss' induction into the army.
- 83 See Ahlzeig (1994: 167–9) for some illustrative quotations.

7 YIDDISH LINGUISTICS AND NATIONAL SOCIALISM

- 1 On this topic Weinreich wrote (1956b: 403): 'I use "fusion language" as the label for "a type of language in which the fusion principle is dominant"; this presupposes another language type in which a different principle – which we may call "lineal" – dominates.' Max Weinreich (1894–1969), originally from Courland, left Germany in the early 1920s for Vilnius (the Yiddish Scientific Institute was founded in 1925). He was intending to attend the Fifth International Congress of Linguists in Brussels, when the Nazis invaded Poland, and he managed to reach the United States (Katz 1986: 35; Murray 1993: 104, 256, 259–60). Weinreich became director of the Yivo Institute for Jewish Research in New York, which took over leadership of the field of

- Yiddish studies after the murder of Jewish intellectuals and writers under the regimes of Hitler and Stalin. The linguist Uriel Weinreich (1926–67), son of Max, became Atran Professor of Yiddish language and literature at Columbia University.
- 2 On the Czernowitz conference, see Kazhdan (1928, 1969), Fishman (1980). See Hutton (1993) for discussion of normativism in modern Yiddish linguistics.
 - 3 On Prilutski, see Hutton (1991).
 - 4 Borokhov was the chief ideologue of *Poale Zion* on the Zionist left. Borokhovism involved dissent both from the socialist–territorialism of Nachman Syrkin and the Romantic Zionism associated with the term *Eretz Israel*. Palestine would be settled by a spontaneous movement of Jewish workers and capitalists, pushed there by economic necessity. The choice was not made on sentimental grounds, but on the basis of pragmatic factors such as the underdeveloped nature of the land. Borokhov argued that the territory to be settled should preferably have a nomadic population and a weak sovereign power (Vital 1982: 405–6). Borokhov predicted for example that the Palestinian Arabs would be eventually be absorbed culturally by the Jews. On Borokhov's Zionism, see also Laqueur (1972: 240–1, 274–7) and Mendelsohn (1981: 31, 137–9).
 - 5 Mises published works on anti-Semitism, the history of writing and Yiddish linguistics (1915, 1919, 1923, 1924; Kresl 1971; Goldsmith 1987; King 1991). He died while being deported to Auschwitz in 1945.
 - 6 There remained a strong current of disdain for Yiddish among German Jewish intellectuals, one inherited from Moses Mendelssohn and his successors in the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, Leopold Zunz (1794–1886), Moritz Steinschneider (1816–1907) and Moritz Güdemann (1835–1918). These scholars played however a crucial role in the evolution of Yiddish studies, as the Yiddishists Ber Borokhov and Nokhem Shtif acknowledged (Borokhov [1913b] 1966: 147). As Shtif pointed out, Güdemann, a Viennese Rabbi, was simply reflecting the prejudice of his generation, and this was understandable, especially 'when we recall the wretched state of Yiddish language and literature at that time' (Shtif 1922: 6).
 - 7 On the notion of 'Ziohebraism' and the struggle against Hebrew as an anti-clerical class struggle, see Fischer/Bin-Nun (1973: 162).
 - 8 For a fuller discussion, see Fischer/Bin-Nun (1973: 40–6), Frakes (1985, 1986, 1989).
 - 9 See for example the works of Martin Buber and Gerschom Scholem (Buber 1988; Scholem 1974). The diverse attitudes of Jewish intellectuals to Hasidism are discussed in Seltzer (1986). The Yiddish linguist Solomon Birnbaum also published a selection of material on the life and work of the Bal Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism (Birnbaum 1920). For an academic study of Jewish mysticism, see Grunwald (1923).
 - 10 However Birnbaum here passes over the substantial numbers of linguistically assimilated Jews in Eastern Europe. Fischer (1973: 87) quotes the following figures. In the 1926 Soviet census (in which Yiddish was officially recognized) approximately 1.9 million of the estimated 2.7 million gave their mother-tongue as Yiddish. In the Polish census of 1921 25.5 per cent gave their mother-tongue as Polish. Fischer estimated that at the time of writing (i.e. the mid-1930s) about 80 per cent of Polish Jews, and 70 per cent of Romanian Jews had Yiddish as their mother-tongue.
 - 11 (1894–1969). Max Weinreich studied in St Petersburg, Berlin and Marburg. For an appreciation of Max Weinreich's life and work, see Althaus (1969).

- 12 See Strauch (1990) for discussion of Gerzon, and a comparison of his work with that of Yekhiel Fischer. For reviews, see Schatz (1902), Fränkel (1903), Loewe (1904), Landau (1904), Jellinek (1904). Fränkel saw in Yiddish a source of words lost to the modern written German.
- 13 Alfred Landau (1850–1935).
- 14 See Strauch (1992: 92) for Landau's list.
- 15 On Nathan Birnbaum's life and thought, see Fishman (1987, 1989).
- 16 'ihre geistige Eigenart'. A modern rendering of this would be 'their distinct cultural identity'.
- 17 Similarly, Katz (1993: 291–2) looks to a future Yiddish literature that will emerge from the various Hassidic communities.
- 18 Thierfelder left the Deutsche Akademie in 1936. On Thierfelder and the journal *Deutsch für Ausländer*, see Schümer (1979) and Ritter (1976: 150–1). For an ideological critique of the Akademie, see Schlicker (1977).
- 19 For discussion of Kloss' writings on Jews and Yiddish, see also Chapter 6.
- 20 There are also remarks in Kloss (1929b: 37) on this topic.
- 21 The wording implies that there has been a change, in that 'we' no longer see (or wish to see) the German Jews as part of the German people. In this sense Kloss seems to concede that German Jews had been previously part of the German people before the Nazi revolution. In German the quotation runs: 'Ob es dem Anglo-Amerikaner unangenehm ist oder nicht: die amerikanischen Neger stehen ihm in einer wesentlichen Beziehung näher als andere Nationalitäten. Entsprechendes gilt für unser Verhältnis zu den Deutsch-Juden, die wir nicht mehr zum deutschen Volkstum rechnen wollen.'
- 22 This distinction, however, relies on a predetermination of what constitutes core Nazi doctrine.
- 23 On Helmut de Boor, see Wehrli (1993: 412).
- 24 The folklorist and dialectologist Adolf Bach, who claimed he was up for the job as director of the Atlas as Wrede's successor in 1933, was likewise a party member (On Bach, see Chapter 3).
- 25 Gierach, born 23 November 1881, was the editor of the second volume of the *Jahrbuch der deutschen Sprache* produced by the Deutsche Akademie, which appeared after his death (Gierach 1944). This phrase ('Wir wollen, dass deutsch bleibt, was deutsch ist, und deutsch wird, was deutsch war') is taken from a tribute to Gierach appended to the preface. A Festschrift to Erich Gierach was published in 1941 (Oberdorffer *et al.* 1941). The contributors to this volume (who include Bruno Schier, Franz Beranek and Josef Hanika) represent a substantial network of scholars, many of whom were radically nationalistic Czech Germans. On Gierach, see Lerchenmüller and Simon (1997: 26–7), Simon (forthcoming d).
- 26 This conference was the Germanists' contribution (*Kriegseinsatz der Germanisten*) to a wider project for scholars in the humanities (*Kriegseinsatz der Geisteswissenschaften*). It resulted in the publication of *Von deutscher Art in Sprache und Dichtung* (Fricke *et al.* 1941). On Panzer's role as chairman of the Gesellschaft für deutsche Bildung in discussions about linguistic purism, see Panzer (1933), Simon (1989a).
- 27 I would like to thank Dr Dovid Katz for pointing out this footnote to me.
- 28 This does not pretend to be a full account of Beranek's career. For some further biographical details, see Hertha Wolf-Beranek's introduction to Beranek (1970). Dr Dovid Katz mentioned to me (personal communication) that there are also rumours about Beranek in relation to the fate of the Yiddish linguist Noyekh Prilutski (1882–1941) under the Nazis.
- 29 This organization promoted radical German nationalism and fought for the exclusion of Jews

- from institutions of higher learning, the so-called ‘Aryan paragraph’.
- 30 In addition, Beranek was a member of the Nazi Teachers Union, the NSLB. Date of joining 1 March 1939, no. 425288 (BDC NSLB file index). Beranek became a member of the NSD-Dozentenbund on 1 September 1942, no. 7834 (BDC PK 1000061212).
- 31 Josef Hanika, born 30 October 1900. See correspondence in IfZg/Yivo MA 116/2. According to the biography in Sturm (1972), Beranek achieved his Habilitation in 1943 in Prague, and became Privatdozent für Volkskunde und Stammesgeschichte Mährens in 1944.
- 32 The note reached the Ahnenerbe on 19 February 1941 (BDC Ahnenerbe 8260000080).
- 33 BA R57 Reisebericht Dr Kloss 20 March 1940–1 April 1941.
- 34 BA R 57 182/3. Beranek also wrote to Kloss on 24 April 1941, asking for an article from *Volksforschung* (the journal edited by Kloss) about recent German settlements in Bohemia and Moravia (R 57 182/2).
- 35 See the letters in BA R 57 182/2.
- 36 See the correspondence in BA R 57 182/2.
- 37 All letters in BDC Ahnenerbe 8260000080. There are further letters from Beranek to Sievers (25 May 1942) and Sievers to Beranek (28 May 1942), the latter informing Beranek about the link Sievers was setting up with Wolfram in Vienna.
- 38 These and other letters concerning Beranek are in BDC Ahnenerbe 8260000080.
- 39 For brief correspondence concerning this book between the Reichsschrifttumskammer, the Ministry of Education and Beranek, see BDC RKK 2101 Box 0078 File 09. In particular there is a note from Beranek dated 12 April 1940 to the Reichsschrifttumskammer complaining that he has heard nothing about his application to publish the book.
- 40 Frank committed suicide in 1945. On Frank, see Heiber (1966).
- 41 (Folge 5, p. 72). Bruno Schier, born 1902, Professor of Folklore at the University of Leipzig, member of *Sudetendeutsche Partei* from 15 September 1934 and of the NSDAP from 15 July 1937. Schier was a member of Rosenberg’s circle of folklorists (see Lixfeld 1994: 19–20, 98–9, 99n, 113, 116). Among his publications was a study of the German house; his work is also one of the links between Nazi linguistics and the symbolism of the house (1934). Schier was also one of the editors of Erich Gierach’s *Festschrift* in 1941.
- 42 Party number 3391290. On Mackensen (born 1901), University of Greifswald, see Max Weinreich (1946).
- 43 See for example discussion in Gilman (1986).
- 44 Georg Bencker, too, was a folklorist from the University of Greifswald. His doctoral thesis on the German *Weihnachtsspiel* (Christmas play) was submitted there in 1933.
- 45 This term is used in the title of H.K. Lenz’s *Jüdische Eindringlinge im Wörter und Citatenschatz der deutschen Sprache*. Münster, 1895.
- 46 ‘Erst die Wortforschung deckte oft ihre wahre Heimat auf’ (Bencker 1943: 225).
- 47 For summaries of further works of this kind, see Kämper-Jensen (1993) on Bertsch (1938), Deubel (1938), and Krause (1937, 1943).
- 48 In the post-war period, *Ostforschung* became a key target for critics from the German Democratic Republic who accused the government and academics of the Federal Republic of Germany of pursuing reactionary policies in Eastern Europe on ‘Greater German’ lines (see Remer 1962).
- 49 Brackmann (1871–1952) became Professor of History (and of the *historische Hilfswissenschaften*) at the University of Königsberg in 1913, then at the University of Marburg

in 1920. He succeeded Dietrich Schäfer at the Prussian state archive in 1922. He was general director of the Prussian state archive from 1929–36, and kommissarischer Leiter des Reichsarchivs from 1935–6. For a brief biography of Albert Brackmann, see Burleigh 1988: 43–59 and Auerbach 1979: 474–5). Brackmann, with his ‘access to high places, [. . .] ramified network of academic and administrative contacts, and [. . .] regiment of grateful former pupils’ is the central figure in Burleigh’s detailed study of *Ostforschung* (1988: 45).

- 50 ‘Die bevölkerungs- und wirtschaftspolitischen Probleme einer europäischen Gesamtlösung der Judenfrage’. For materials on the *Hohe Schule*, see Poliakov and Wulf (1983: 127–64).
- 51 See Seraphim (1941a) for a multidisciplinary analysis of the Jewish population of southeastern Europe and Seraphim (1941b) for an account of the economic structure of the General Gouvernement.
- 52 Seraphim is concerned with the Jews of Latvia, Lithuanian, Poland (strictly speaking excepting those of West Prussia and Posen), European Russia without the Caucasus, Romania without the Sephardic Jews, Carpatho-Russia and Slovakia, but excluding the Jews of Bohemia, Moravia, Austria and southern Hungary.
- 53 This of course implies that Jews are more united than Germans, and that Germans, because they are bound to the land on which they live, have strong regional loyalties which tend to override their identification with the nation.
- 54 Seraphim lists works by Solomon Birnbaum, Jacob Gerzon, and Heinz Loewe in his bibliography.
- 55 Thus the notion of mother-tongue is also linked to the rejection of Christianity, seen as a universal religion and one which has replaced the Aryan or Indo-Germanic religion (Mandel 1942).
- 56 On the Jews as driven by their racial make-up to be nomadic, see Seraphim (1941a: 17).
- 57 Seraphim cites only one non-Jewish authority, H.F.K. Günther (1938: 405n).
- 58 This remains relevant to contemporary dialectology, even if the claim to territoriality can only be made in retrospect (Herzog *et al.* 1993).
- 59 See discussion in Ayers (1992: 217–9) for a comparison of Hitler’s views on this topic with those of Wyndham Lewis.
- 60 Alternatively, Yiddishism was reintegrated into Jewish religious orthodoxy. Nathan Birnbaum, looking back at the Czernowitz conference of 1908 at the request of the Yivo, concluded:

I am afraid that those [cultural] workers set out on a false path. At the time of the conference I did not and could not see this. But today – because I have returned to the Jewish Torah and to those who do not abandon it – I see it and am worried. The radical parties have virtually monopolized the Yiddish language and in so doing have made it somewhat suspect among the mass of pious Jews, the first and true creators of Yiddish. They have also placed Yiddish in danger of losing its linguistic independence, its true Jewishness, its strong colors, and of becoming a gray shadow of itself, a kind of dry creation or just another European tongue.

(Translated and quoted in Goldsmith 1987: 230)

8 VITALIST LINGUISTICS, LINGUISTICS AS THEOSOPHY, CHARACTEROLOGY

- 1 Driesch, criticized by the Rosenberg Bureau for being a ‘pacifist’ and a ‘representative of the

Weimar system', was forbidden to lecture in public from 1935 onwards (Leaman 1993: 36). Gehlen was a Nazi party member (1 May 1933, no. 2.432.245) and active with the Rosenberg Bureau. In the occupied Netherlands, Plessner was forbidden to publish (1941) and then to teach (1943) (see Leaman 1993: 41, 69).

- 2 Gerd Simon (personal communication).
- 3 For further discussion of linguistics and evolutionary theory, texts by Schleicher, Haeckel, Bleek and Whitney, and bibliographical details, see Koerner (1983).
- 4 The links between Hackel's thought as expressed in *Die Welträtsel* (1899) and Nazism are documented in Gasman (1971: 147–82)
- 5 On fascism and modernism, see Jameson (1979), Ayers (1992), Hewitt (1993). For discussion of recent books on T.S. Eliot and anti-Semitism, see Medcalf (1996).
- 6 For an intellectual biography of Jünger, see Meyer (1993). Quotations are from the Klett edition of Jünger's collected works. This section cannot do justice to Jünger's writings as a whole, nor discuss in any depth his relationship with National Socialism.
- 7 Whatever one thinks of Jünger's fascist militarism, it is evident that there was no room within his soldier's code of honour for the murder of unarmed civilians, for death camps, and the like. The word 'nihilism' is being used here by Wistrich to bridge two morally quite distinct positions.
- 8 Rimbaud's poem begins:

A noir, E blanc, I rouge, U vert, O blue: voyelles,
Je dirai quelque jour vos naissances latentes

(Bernard 1960: 110).

Ammer's German translation (praised by Jünger) renders this as:

A schwarz, E weiss, U grün, O blau – mir ward
der tiefste Sinn von eurem Klang geoffenbart

(see Rimbaud 1964).

- 9 On this point, see Zimmermann (1992: 59–60).
- 10 For a philosophy of language that draws on characterological imagery, see Spengler ([1922] 1993: 693–4). For the language–body link, see for example Lakoff (1987).
- 11 For discussion of Brinkmann's career, see Chapter 3 .
- 12 Brinkmann's post-war view on linguistic community was that 'Signs of human language constitute for the semiotic community of a civilized people a total horizon and a historical continuity' (1981: 228).
- 13 Sonderheft no. 3, 1961.
- 14 See Ivo (1994), Scharf (1994) for an extensive discussion of Chomsky's 'appropriation' of Humboldt.
- 15 For Ernst Kriek's interpretation of the notion of 'das wirkende Wort', see Kriek (1939b). For the word *Leistung*, see also Hunger (1939a).
- 16 I would like to thank Professor John Joseph for first drawing my attention to the manifold links between theosophy and linguistics, and for many enlightening discussions of this issue.
- 17 Whorf was influenced by the etymological mysticism of Fabre d'Olivet (see Carroll 1956).
- 18 Hans Sperber, professor at the University of Köln, was dismissed on racial grounds by the Nazis and emigrated to the United States where he taught at Ohio State University.

- 19 On Steiner and Theosophy, see the extensive discussion in Washington (1994).
- 20 That divide can also be conceptualized in terms of the arbitrariness of the sign (Sechehaye, Bally and Frei 1940/1).
- 21 Academic etymologists believe they can distinguish between scholarship and speculative fantasy. Robert Graves, writing in the Foreword to his etymological work *The White Goddess* noted that 'since the first edition appeared in 1946, no expert in ancient Irish or Welsh has offered me the least help in refining my argument [. . .]. I am disappointed, but not totally surprised' (1961: 9).
- 22 On Jones' method, see Roy Harris' introduction to the 'Discourses delivered at the Asiatick society' (Harris 1993). The quotation from Jones is from 'The Third Discourse' (p. 34). For a selection of Jones' writings, see Pachori (1993). For the intellectual background, see also Grottsch (1988), Marshall (1970), Rocher (1993, 1995).
- 23 Freemasonry and theosophy were for example part of the explanatory framework within which colonial scholars approached Chinese secret societies, or triads (see Giles 1880; Ward and Stirling 1925/6).
- 24 Stormfront: National Socialist Primer, 2nd internet edition updated 14/7/95 (<http://204.181.176.4:80/stormfront/>).
- 25 Lessing (1925: 21) argued that the new science of characterology could also be called 'Wissenschaft von Wesen, Symbolwissenschaft, Typologie, Eidologie, Phänomenologie', but these might lead to misunderstandings.
- 26 Vernon (1965: 19) gives Galton the credit for pioneering the notion of measuring mental properties on a scale 'in a manner similar to physical ones'. Galton also coined the term 'positive eugenics' (Dikötter 1995: 111).
- 27 For an interesting discussion of Klages in context, see Kaltenbrunner (1969).
- 28 See the *Zentralblatt für Graphologie*, volume 6, October 1935.
- 29 Contemporary genetics continues in this tradition with the hunt for genes for homosexuality, criminality, etc.
- 30 The text is printed in full in Sebeok (1981: 106–7). On Bühler, see in addition Eschbach (1984, 1987). On characterology and *Ausdruckspsychologie* in the Third Reich, and the work of Ernst Kretschmer, Erich Rothacker, Philipp Lersch, Hubert Rohrer, and Albert Wellek, see Geuter (1988).
- 31 Thomas Mann subsequently accused Ludwig Klages, the intellectual force behind the journal, of Nazi sympathies (1930: 15ff.; Baer 1941: 1925).
- 32 On characterology and Klages, see Rosenberg (1934: 137). Rosenberg kept a very close and suspicious eye on Klages (see materials from the Rosenberg Bureau on Klages in the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich, MA 116/7).
- 33 On this topic, and the relationship between Zen and Japanese nationalism, see Scharf (1995).
- 34 Deconstruction also has a forerunner in the movement of General Semantics, founded in the United States by Alfred Korzybski (1879–1950) in 1938. This movement was based on 'anti-Aristotelianism', and involved a rejection of the canons of Western logic. Its method involves the fight against the domination of linguistic categories over thought, and it argues for the deconstruction of two-valued oppositions.
- 35 In this context one could also look at phonetics, which, like stylistics, straddles the distinction between group *langue* and individual *parole*.

- 36 The accusation of anti-Semitism arises in the first instance in relation to a secret appendix to the By-laws of the Analytical Psychology Club of Zürich, discovered by Stephen Flowers, which limited Jewish membership to a quota (Noll 1994: 279–94). After the resignation of Ernst Kretschmer as president of the Allgemeine Ärztliche Gesellschaft für Psychotherapie in 1933, Jung became president of the International Association. Matthias Heinrich Göring (1879–1945), a relation of Hermann Göring, became president of the German association. Jung was editor until 1939. Critics of Jung point to his responsibility as editor for pro-Nazi material published in the journal, and argue that he was intellectually in sympathy with fascism, articulating supposed distinctions between the Jewish and Aryan race unconscious (Masson 1990: 140–3). Jung defended his assumption of the editorship of the *Zentralblatt für Psychotherapie* as an attempt to preserve academic co-operation in the face of Nazi intolerance (McGuire and Hull 1980: 197). Jung claimed that he had only stayed on as editor because of the pleadings of the English and Dutch representatives, but had finally resigned (McGuire and Hull 1980: 198). See McLynn (1996) for an informative discussion.
- 37 In order to understand this somewhat obscure book properly, one would need to go into the intellectual background and the works of Ernst Fuhrmann in greater depth than I have been able to do as yet. What is striking is the tone, which is that of a mystical primitivist vitalism.
- 38 For an introduction to Steiner's thinking about language, see Steiner (1959).
- 39 *Das Geheimnis der Runen* (1908), *Die Namen der Völkerstämme Germaniens und deren Deutung* (1909), *Die Ursprache der Ario-Germanen und ihre Mysteriensprache* (1914).
- 40 See Pfister-Schwaighusen (1905). Pfister-Schwaighusen was active in the German Language Association (Deutscher Sprachverein) until his lack of purist zeal led to a falling out (Gerd Simon, personal communication).
- 41 On Christmas in the Third Reich, see Gajek 1990.
- 42 One member of the Nazi elite with anti-occult leanings was Goebbels, who had no time for mysticism or the cult of the Germanic. This ideological stance played a key part in Goebbels' political rivalry with Rosenberg (see Cuomo 1995: 211). Ernst Röhm likewise 'openly mocked the complex philosophical mysticism of Rosenberg, Himmler and Darré' (Fest 1970: 212).
- 43 On Wüst, see BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001745/B-319/V and BDC WIO 8200003511, BDC PK 1210010247 and the sources cited in Simon (1985b). A brief biographical sketch can be found in Lerchenmüller and Simon (1997: 63–4). See Simon (forthcoming c).
- 44 See BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001745/B –319 IV. The talk was held on 10 March 1937.
- 45 BDC PK 1210010247.
- 46 For further illustration and a fuller statement of Wüst's views on race and Indo-Germanic religion, see Wüst (1939). See Pollock (1993) for an important discussion of Wüst in the context of National Socialist Indology, and the wider context of 'Orientalist' views of Indian languages and cultures. On neo-Nazi and fascist ideas within the contemporary New Age movement, see Heschel (1992), Kalman and Murray (1995), Brearley (1996).
- 47 As editor of the *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, Wüst prefaced Max Rumpf's (1941/2) article with a few magnanimous words of tolerant dissent.
- 48 Koerner (1989a) provides a wealth of sources. Leopold (1974) offers a detailed account of the debates about Aryan theory in relation to India.
- 49 'deutschen und artverwandten Blutes'
- 50 Kienle, b. 1908, University of Hamburg, was a member of the Ahnenerbe, as head of the

- 'Comparative Linguistics' department (Lixfeld 1994: 196; Lerchenmüller and Simon 1997: 64).
- 51 Siebert (born 21 March 1911), a Gymnasiumlehrer, studied classical philology, German, history and Indo-European studies at the University of Munich from 1933–7. His Promotion (2 February 1939) was in *Indogermanistik* under Professor Höfler. Siebert was admitted into the NSDAP on 1 May 1933 (No. 4466546), and the SA on 1 October, 1933. He was released from the SA on medical grounds in August 1940. A note from Wüst to Sievers dated 4 January 1941 requested that he be allowed to employ Siebert as an assistant. Siebert had made a very good impression on him, and his exemption from military service had been extended until 30 June 1941 after a request by the headmaster of his school. A letter from Sievers to Siebert via Wüst confirmed a subvention of 150 RM per month. A memo dated 12 March 1942 reports that Wüst had informed the Ahnenerbe on 8 March 1942 that Siebert had been called up for military service (*curriculum vitae* and the three letters, in BDC Ahnenerbe 8260001426). A political evaluation of Siebert for employment as an interpreter (the form was completed between 4 April 1941 and 9 May 1941) shows that Siebert was an active in a number of different ways. He was confirmed to be politically trustworthy, a member of the SA from 1933 to 1940 until invalidated out with knee problems, and active in Nazi educational activities and organizations on a number of levels. He was admitted to the NSDAP on 1 May 1937 (Nr. 4466546), and became a member of the Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt (National Socialist People's Welfare Organization), National Socialist Teachers' Union (NSLB) from December 1937. He was a Blockleiter from 19 November 1940 to 15 March 1941 in Nymphenburg; then active in the Ludwigstrasse branch of the DAF. He had shown his secure grasp of matters of 'world view' by putting on an exhibition called 'Deutsche Grösse'. He had no religious affiliation.
 - 52 For example, Koerner (1989a) points to two American sources where the term 'Aryan' is used to promote white supremacist ideas, Pike (1873) and Morris (1888). In this context one should also give due 'credit' to the Celticist Ernest Renan and the 'evangelist of race', Houston Stewart Chamberlain (Field 1981). For a discussion of the Aryan homeland and original language, see also Sweet (1900).
 - 53 For a Jewish view of the threat of assimilation and racial mixing, see Ruppin (1930). Segev characterizes Ruppin as looking for 'a connection between the physical appearance and the mental characteristics of the Jews'. Ruppin met the race theorist H.F.K. Günther in 1933 (Segev 1993: 19). On the Jews as a people united by (among other things) consciousness of their blood ties, see Rappaport (1929/30: 99). On the notions of a Zionist 'new man' and 'human material', see Segev (1993: 109, 121).
 - 54 On this topic, see also Pollock (1993: 89–91). Pollock cites works by Lommel (1934) and Krahe (1935) as taking tentative issue with the use of the term in contemporary discourse (1993: 89n).
 - 55 Professor in Halle, director of the Landesanstalt für Volksheilkunde.
 - 56 It is not possible here to review all aspects of the Indo-European question. For a useful contemporary survey, see J.W. Hauer (1939).
 - 57 See also Römer (1985: 66–8).
 - 58 On comparative philologists as the promoters of theories of an Indo-European people in the nineteenth century, see Leopold (1974).

9 LINGUISTICS, RACE AND THE HORROR OF ASSIMILATION

- 1 The reference is placed here in a footnote to avoid an unfortunate juxtaposition in the bibliography: Hitler, Adolf (1992) *Mein Kampf* Translated by Ralph Mannheim, with an introduction by D.C. Watt. Pimlico: London. First published by Eher: München, 1925–6.
- 2 On Gobineau, see Römer (1985) and Young (1995).
- 3 For discussion of Broca in the context of nineteenth century views on race, hybridity and fertility, see Young (1995: 13–14, 16, 18).
- 4 See Young (1995: 1–28) on nineteenth century debates about race and culture, human monogenesis vs. polygenesis, hybridity, etc.
- 5 For the ramifications of this theory within Indian cultural politics, see Leopold (1970).
- 6 For discussion of Farrar in the context of his time, and biographical details, see Leopold (1974: 585, 585n).
- 7 Later Whitney apparently changed his mind to an extent about the racial composition of the French:

The mass of the people of France are Celts by descent, with characteristic Celtic traits which no mixture or education has been able to obliterate; but there is hardly an appreciable element of Celtic in the French language; this is almost purely a Romanic dialect, a modern representative of the ancient Latin.

(1875: 9)

- 8 The studies are Eimer (1888–1901), Darlington (1947, 1955), Brosnahan (1961).
- 9 In addition to the discussion here, see the examples given by Poliakov (1974: 257–61).
- 10 Van Ginneken's major work was entitled 'Race and Language', *Ras en taal* (1935).
- 11 See for example Pittard (1927: 307–8).
- 12 Quotations are from Roy Harris' translation of the *Cours*. Page numbers refer to the pagination of the French text, also given in Harris' translation.
- 13 For discussion of the notion of 'typical' racial types, see Boas (1931).
- 14 Current writing that attempts to link 'the linguistic, archaeological and genetic evidence' (Renfrew 1992: 60) includes the work of Colin Renfrew and L.L. Cavalli-Sforza (1995).
- 15 Jacobs (1997: 308) points out that most of the victims were Yiddish-speakers.
- 16 The edition being cited reads 'Ethnological and philosophical', although in the context only 'philological' makes sense.
- 17 For further discussion of the notion of mother-tongue in the history of German linguistics, see Ahlzweig (1994). Schmidt-Rohr, born 1890, studied *Germanistik* in Berlin and Jena, wrote extensively for the *Wandervogel* movement, did military service in the First World War. Schmidt-Rohr published his first publication on the politics of language in 1917 under the name Georg Schmidt. He was a teacher by profession (in Frankfurt/Oder). Schmidt-Rohr disappeared at the end of the war after joining the last-ditch mobilization against the advancing Allies, the *Volkssturm* (see Simon 1985a: 377–82).
- 18 See the extensive discussion in Simon (1979b, 1985a, 1985b, 1986a).
- 19 It is hard to make too much sense out of this, but this discussion does illustrate the importance of the notion of *Seele*.

- 20 Gerd Simon informed me that Kloss had at one point sent Schmidt-Rohr the contents-page of a book entitled *Von Auftrag und Ordnung der Völker*. Schmidt-Rohr was a member of the advisory board (*Beirat*) of the DAI (Gerd Simon, personal communication).
- 21 This is a slightly amended version of Charles Atkinson's translation (1947: 120).
- 22 (1878–1940), professor in Berlin.
- 23 Neckel also saw linguistic and racial identity has having belonged to a distant past.
- 24 On this term, see for example Nietzsche's essay 'Wir Philologen' in the collected works (1956: 322), and Pinker (1994).
- 25 Iggers (1983: 246) quotes the philosopher Eduard Spranger on man's historicity, his lack of a stable nature, as follows: 'it is indeed exactly this, the fact that man's character is not shaped by nature, that distinguishes him from all subhuman nature'.
- 26 On the amnesia of nationalism, see Anderson (1991). The amnesia of linguistics as to its own history parallels that of modern nationalism.
- 27 The chief ideologue of the peasantry was Walter Darré, the so-called Reichsbauernführer. Günther's work on the peasantry was dedicated to Darré (Günther 1941).
- 28 One could just as well write: 'Jews' were 'native speakers' of 'German' and were not 'Germans'.

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